Croton-Harmon Union Free School District

2017
2022

Strategic Coherence Plan

Challenging all students to be critical and creative thinkers

Mission, Focus And Constancy of Purpose

Board of Education Endorsement of Plan:
May 4, 2017

Excellence in Education — Croton-Harmon Schools

Croton-Harmon Union Free School District
Strategic Coherence Plan

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Executive Summary

The world we are preparing our children to live in is rapidly changing. With the advent of the digital age and the interconnected global economy, the definition of what it means to appropriately prepare a student for life learning and work beyond school has been transformed. Content knowledge and high test scores are no longer the only variables that portend student success, we know now that they also need to develop a sophisticated set of skills to ensure they can navigate the challenges we know they will encounter.

In Croton-Harmon, after thoughtful consideration and research, we believe the priorities among those required skills include communication (speaking, writing & listening), information literacy, critical and creative thinking for problem solving and the ability to find resources to help solve those problems. Without these skills, we know students will have limited choices and will not have the ability to appropriately adjust and learn as circumstances and opportunities change throughout their lives.

This planning process was designed to determine to what degree a Croton-Harmon Union Free School District education make certain that a student who graduates from here will leave with these skills and the content knowledge needed to succeed regardless of their future path of choice. The actions identified by the plan outline what needs to happen to realize that vision. Unlike traditional strategic planning which seeks to collect data and set goals related to numerous and frequently unrelated topics, this Strategic Coherence Plan was totally focused on just those elements of work that support the development and improvement of skill-based student success. How are K-12 teaching and classroom experiences facilitating student practice of communication (speaking, writing & listening), information literacy, critical and creative thinking for problem solving and the ability to find resources to help solve those problems? How are we measuring our success and using that K-12 data to create accountability and the continuous improvement of student performance in those areas? How are we supporting the social and emotional needs of our students to ensure their success? How do we budget and plan and make sure that all our K-12 work is designed to increase the number of children who leave Croton-Harmon ready to perform these skills at a high level? By asking these questions and building the answers based on the good things that are already happening in Croton-Harmon, the members of the Strategic Coherence Planning team have identified the steps that need to be taken over the next 5 years to help every child build their skills. These steps will be consistent with the district's ongoing commitment to providing support for the social and emotional development of our students K-12.

This notion of building on past success is a key theme. Over the last decade, mandates from Washington and Albany have encroached on our local decision making, creating policy roadblocks that have impacted our ability to achieve our mission. In reaction to this, our district leadership and

Board of Education began the process of retaking local initiative to overcome these distractions. On these foundations, this plan will accelerate Croton-Harmon's unified vision of successful preparation of all students. On a day to day basis, as the plan is rolled out and the proposed actions are implemented, the district-wide focus will increasingly spotlight how students can demonstrate the degree to which they have mastered the critical skills of communication (speaking, writing & listening), information literacy, critical and creative thinking for problem solving and the ability to find resources to help solve those problems. Students will encounter lessons and projects where specific feedback on how well they are applying their skills and what they need to do to improve in all their classes throughout their Croton-Harmon educational experience. This feedback will be guided by rigorous standards that have been validated by educators across the country. These frameworks will provide consistency and reliability so that students will get similar expectations from grade level to grade level and class to class in these critical skill areas.

Parents will be hearing more about what kinds of work students are doing that support these skills and they will be learning the language that the Croton-Harmon schools use to measure and evaluate how well they are doing them. Over time, they will see the evidence that their children can apply the district's foundational skills effectively and they will be reported on so all are accountable for their acquisition.

Community members should be seeing that budgets and resources are designed to increase the district's capacity to support these skills for the entire student body. As we work to improve practice and build student capacity for communication (speaking, writing & listening), information literacy, critical and creative thinking for problem solving and the ability to find resources to help solve those problems, we intend to maintain the successful aligned practices that Croton-Harmon is currently engaged in, but build on them so that teachers have the instructional space and resources they need to do quality work at a reasonable pace focused on those things that the Croton-Harmon community values most.

This report is designed to tell the story and results of the entire planning process – from the "vital few" rationale and assumptions that guided it, through the data collection and analysis activities, and then to the priority strategies and specific actions that will guide the first 12-18 months of work to be done. Those strategies are the start of a multi-year effort to reframe the public-school experience in Croton-Harmon so that the district's Mission of empowering our community to strive for excellence and embrace the opportunities of our globally connected world can be realized for every student.

Planning Context

The Croton-Harmon Union Free School District has a history of success and high achievement. A personalized approach to teaching that is found in our schools makes the District one of the most successful in a county known for the high quality of its public schools. Small class size and an exemplary faculty contribute to Croton's superb reputation. The district has been recognized by the state and the nation for its outstanding programs and services and encompasses parts of the towns of Cortlandt and Yorktown and includes the village of Croton-on-Hudson. The district population is approximately 13,000 with some 1,600 students attending Croton schools this year.

Because of the wide variety of learning approaches and programs, Croton students can reach their full potential, develop the habits of mind and social skills necessary to become lifelong learners, and be able to contribute positively to society. Learning expectations are defined in written form at each grade level and subject area so both students and parents know what to anticipate. Traditional standardized tests, performance-based tests, and individual student portfolios are all used to measure a student's accomplishments.

The district provides a full complement of supports to each school to ensure that all student needs are met. These include counselors, psychologists, social workers, occupational, physical and speech therapists, as well as special education teachers. A wide array of other learning experiences are also available, including but not limited to athletics, internships, clubs, and workshops. A vibrant after-school program with classes in science, languages, chess drawing, tae kwon do, and much more is available to elementary school children. A privately run before-and-after-school daycare program is available at the elementary level. A middle school program provides age-appropriate after-school care along with enrichment classes. An extensive adult education program features courses in computers, cooking, art, fitness, and foreign languages, among many others. Parents and community members are involved in school activities as volunteers in the schools and on advisory committees that tackle such issues as long-range planning, wellness, the athletic program, and the arts.

For the last eight years, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Edward Fuhrman, the Croton-Harmon School House has been the representative graphic organizer used to illustrate how the various parts of the district work together to support student success (*Figure 1)*. This graphic captures a systems-approach and illustrates the inter-connectedness of the various parts of the system. The district Mission and Vision are at the top to

demonstrate that our commitment to student success is our goal and that everything else is under that "roof." The three "pillars" that support the Mission and Vision are: 1. Learning Standards- what we want students to know and be able to do, 2. Systems, Supports and Structures, the protocols and supports that the system uses to support the accomplishment of mission and vision, and 3. Learning by Design- a backwards design for curriculum, instruction, assessment and technology integration.

The purpose of the schoolhouse is multi-faceted. The schoolhouse shows the links between various aspects of our work- everything goes back to mission and vision. It is also a resource bank that holds key documents and websites, and provides a historical road map of our work over the last eight years. Over the last two years, more
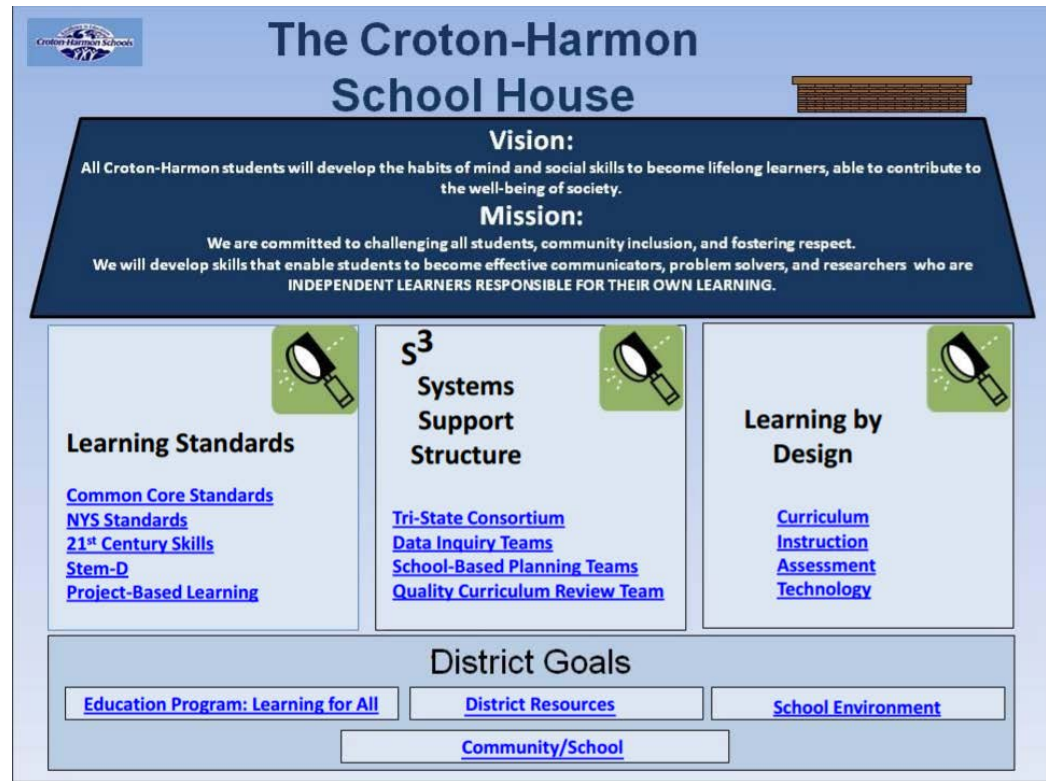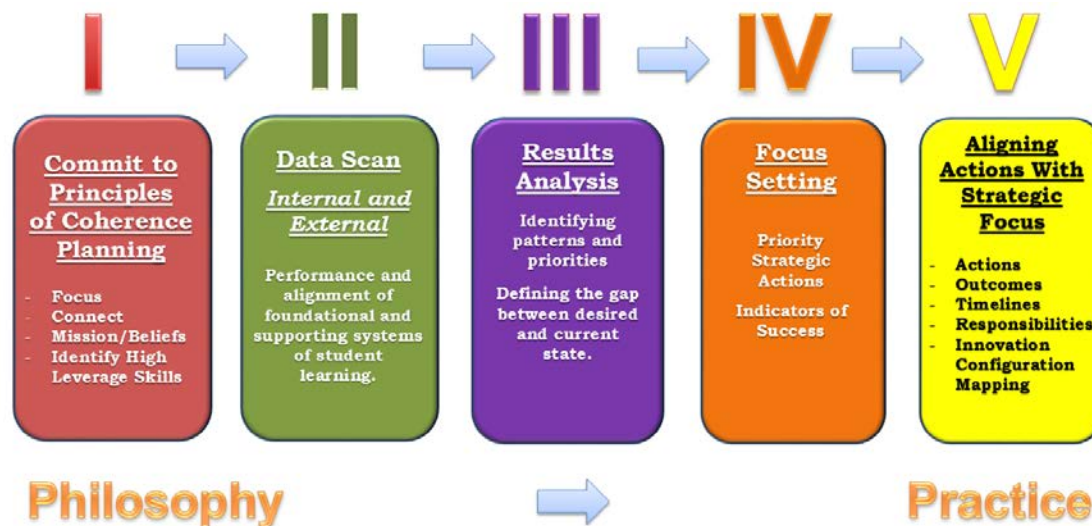

Figure 1

specifically the district's work has focused on creating grade/course level common assessments, as we know that the use of such assessment leads to increased student learning. This focus is reflected in the 2015-2016 Goal Statement (To continuously improve student learning through aligned common assessments that measure achievement of the application of State Standards and 21st century skills identified in the C-H mission and vision and are used to inform/support professional practice) and Essential Question(s) (How do our assessment and measurement systems align with our goals for learning, teaching practices, and the demands of data driven instruction?).

Recognizing the impact that this sense of purpose that common assessments was having on the learning culture in the district and as a response to the growing unease with the growing challenge of responding to New York state mandates that threatened to shift focus away from student learning, in the spring of 2016, Superintendent Fuhrman launched an effort to bring Croton-Harmon's pursuit of improved student learning to the next level. After a six-month selection process which included several days of professional learning and staff interactions, Dr. Fuhrman invited Jonathan Costa,

a planning consultant, to meet with the Board in the spring of 2016. In his presentation, Costa proposed a different path from traditional strategic planning. Costa explained that his process, Strategic Coherence Planning, employs a backwards design method similar to those illustrated in the Croton-Harmon School House. Just as it does for instructional planning, backwards design allows participants to start the improvement process by agreeing on what student success (skills and attributes) would look like for Croton-Harmon students and then focus solely on those research-based practices that ensure a coherent PreK-12 system that supports that definition of student success. The five-phase process is outlined below *(Figure 2)* and is described in greater detail in the next section of this report.

(Figure 2)

With this student centered focus, the entire Strategic Coherence Planning process is designed to create a system dedicated to ensuring that every Croton-Harmon child acquires the skills and attributes required for success in life, learning and work beyond school. The Board of Education endorsed this approach and in June of 2016, the Superintendent convened a Strategic Coherence Planning Team consisting of key staff members, Board of Education members, and a diverse group of community representatives to complete the work required in each of the five phases. The members of this Strategic Coherence Planning Team and their affiliations are as follows:

Planning Team List

Dr. Edward Fuhrman	*Superintendent*	*Lauren Scollins*	*PVC Teacher*
Dr. Deborah O'Connell	*Assistant Superintendent*	*Dorothy Perrone*	*Special Education Teacher*
Diane Chaissan	*Assistant Superintendent for Business*	*Lauren Callaway*	*CET PTA Representative*
Karen Gatto	*Director Pupil Personnel Services*	*Laura Labbate*	*PVC PTA Representative*
Deborah August	*Director of Instructional Technology*	*Sara Langbert*	*CHHS PTA Representative*
Kelly Maloney	*CET Principal*	*Jeanne Harrington-Schiermbock*	*SEPTA Representative*
Dr. Barbara Ulm	*PVC Principal*	*Dante Mancinelli*	*Student Representative*
Alan Capasso	*CHHS Principal*	*Sophia Mathews*	*Student Representative*
Patrice Davidson	*BOE Representative*	*Lori Phillips*	*Croton Free Library*
Andrea Furey	*BOE Representative*	*Michael Plotkin*	*PVC Assistant Principal*
Dorothy Perrone	*Special Education Teacher*	*Pamela Morrison*	*CHHS Teacher*
Sarah Wellman	*CTA Union Representative*	*Jonathan Costa*	*Facilitator*
Iris Cross-Bugliosi	*BOE Representative*	*Lynn Allen*	*Facilitator*

Tom Cunningham – Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics

Work Process and Planning Phases Detail

The Strategic Coherence Planning team began their work with an introductory meeting in June of 2016 designed to: 1. Provide an orientation to the challenges presented by planning in this era, 2. Familiarize everyone with the five-phase strategic coherence planning process, and 3. Explore the basic principles of coherence that are the foundation of this approach to planning. These principles are summarized in the following declaration: a district can only ensure student success in a digital age by articulating a clear vision of what that student success looks like and then thoughtfully connect that vision to specific goals for learning, aligned measures of learning, and associated effective teaching practices *(Figure 3 -Foundational Instructional Systems)*.

(Figure 3)

This formula for student success may seem obvious, but as noted earlier, the last several years have demonstrated that with a myriad of external distractions, it is easy for planning groups to lose their way. Time and energy are finite resources and the more work that needs to be done with those limited commodities the more fragmented and dispersed the efforts on the most important issues can become. The Strategic Coherence Planning Team took some time to discuss this reality and review the major mandates and changes that have been introduced in New York, and by extension in Croton-Harmon, over just the last five years:

- A variety of testing and educator evaluation changes driven by New York state's No Child Left Behind waiver and its Race to the Top program which dramatically changed the way every educator was supervised and evaluated in the district
- Making explicit connections between student test results and educator evaluation processes (APPR)
- Annual educator ratings
- Language arts curriculum and instructional challenges including higher expectations related to new Common Core Learning Standards
- Mathematics curriculum and instructional challenges including higher expectations related to new Common Core Learning Standards

- Social Studies curriculum and instructional challenges including higher expectations related to new national standards framework

- Science curriculum and instructional challenges including higher expectations related to the new Next Generation Science Standards

- Transition to a new generation of computer based adaptive student assessments

- New models of professional learning and support guided by a new set of voluntary national professional learning standards

- The inevitable transition from a primarily print based learning environment to one that features ready access to digital resources

- The challenges of meeting the social and emotional needs of an increasingly wide range of students

- Additional adjustments to the above as now required by the recently passed Education Transformation Act of 2015 which will go into effect in the summer of 2016.

With all of this, it is not surprising that professionals, parents and students alike can feel adrift in the tumult. The key learning takeaway for the team at the launch meeting was understanding that Strategic Coherence Planning is about rediscovering and recommitting to a focus on student success and then rebuilding the systems connections required to make it happen for all students in the Croton-Harmon Public Schools.

Following their orientation to this conceptual background, The Strategic Coherence Planning Team explored the five phase planning process in detail. **Phase I** is about understanding the four Strategic Coherence Outcomes that frame the backwards design. This is why Phase I is entitled "Commit to the Principles of Coherence." These outcomes are the reference point for each of the following phases of the planning process; the student goal setting, the data collection, and all of the action planning that is to come. Each of these four outcomes are described below with accompanying illustration of the foundational concept for each.

Strategic Coherence Outcome One: Goals for Learning
(Figure 4)

The district has identified, defined and committed to supporting a focused set of appropriate student learning goals that will ensure student success in life, learning and work beyond school.
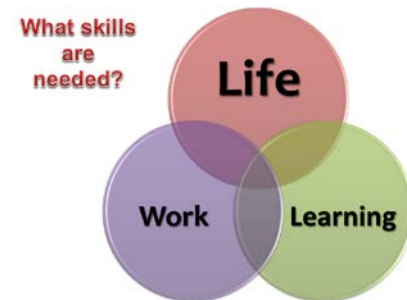
Figure 4

Strategic Coherence Outcome Two: Teaching for Learning
(Figure 5)

The district has committed to supporting instructional and adult learning strategies that ensure rigorous, digitally supported pedagogical experiences aligned with the district's student goals.

Instruction that depends and focuses less on these elements…	...and depends and focuses more on these elements.
Less paper Less about facts Less about single source research Less about rankings Less about memory and volume Less just in case cramming Less about compliance with rigid systems	*More pixels* *More about skills* *More about synthesis of multiple information sources* *More about experiences* *More about judgment and rigor* *More just in time learning* *More about creating value for one's self and others*

(Figure 5)

Strategic Coherence Outcome Three: Measures of Learning
(Figure 6)

The district uses and reports on appropriate and balanced measures of student and adult success that are
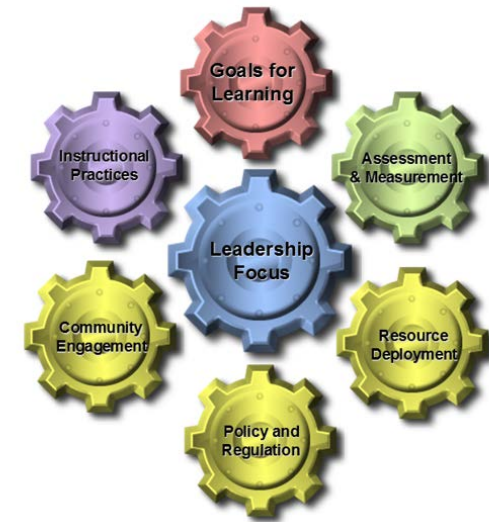
aligned with its student learning goals.

(Figure 6)

Strategic Coherence Outcome Four: Alignment and Coherence
(Figure 7)

The district aligns its supporting organizational systems to support the acquisition of its student learning goals (the Yellow Gears – Community Engagement, Policy and Regulation, and Resource Allocations).

(Figure 7)

With the four Strategic Coherence Outcomes explained and explored, the Strategic Coherence Planning Team then got a preview of the other phases of the planning process.

Phase II - Complete a data scan of existing practices compared to those described in the four coherence outcomes.

Phase III - Complete a results analysis to determine the gaps between the current state and the desired coherence outcomes.

Phase IV - Forge a consensus on which gaps are the most critical to address to set the focus for future work.

Phase V - Plan and align work and action across the across the organization to ensure that the coherence outcomes are realized and the associated levels of student success obtained.

Once the process overview was complete, the group explored the long-term organizational structure that is supported by the Strategic Coherence Planning process. When successful, a school system that has completed the process emerges from it united behind a common pursuit of the key attributes of student success that have been identified by their community. The process should leave behind a system where student learning goals, measures and practices are aligned with adult performance goals, measures and practices, and all are driven and supported by a unified vision of goals, measures and practices at the organizational/building level *(Figure 8)*.
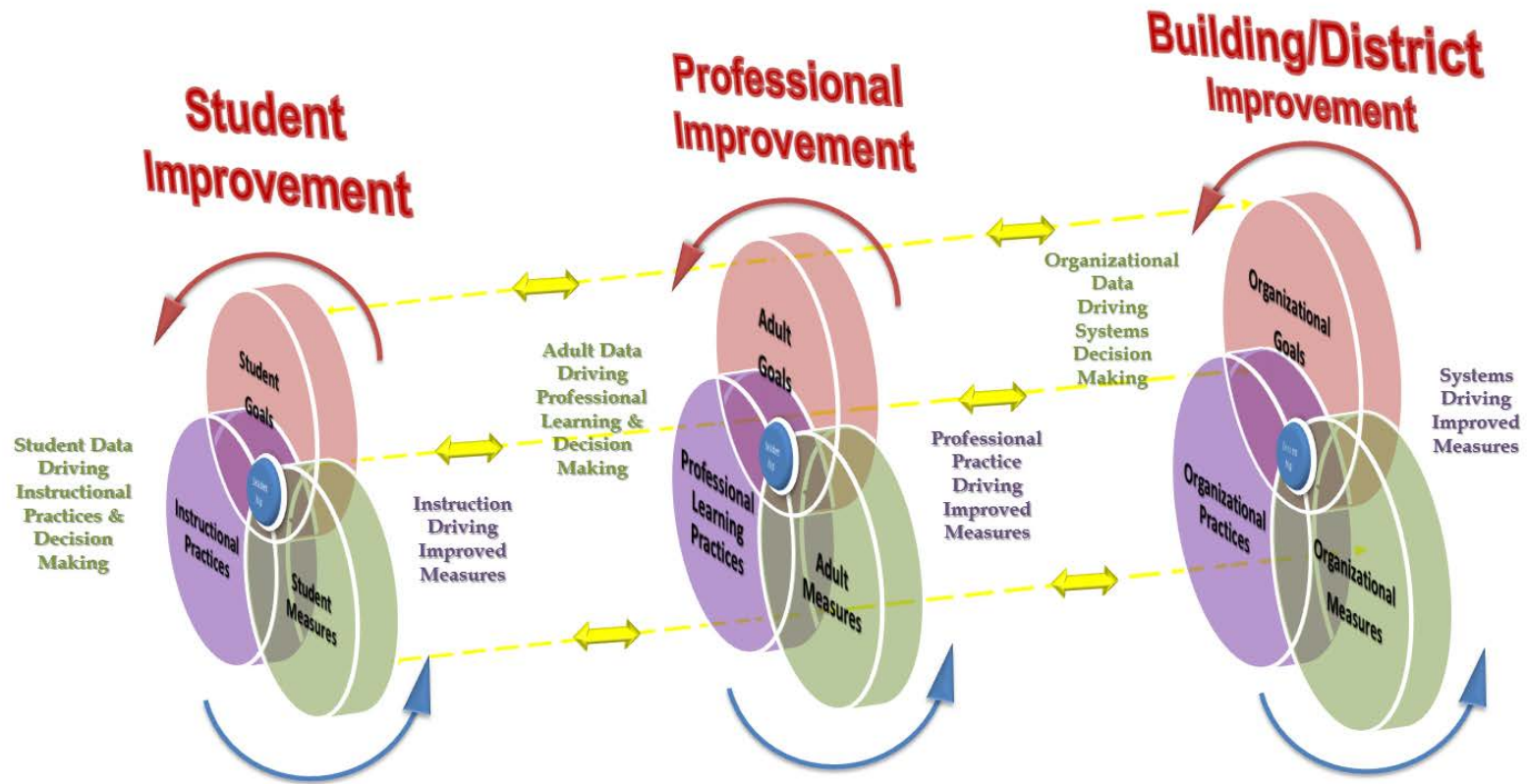
Figure 8

Another task of the opening meeting was an activity designed to record the group's thinking about their expectations for the planning process itself. Given the district's Mission and Vision, this discussion was organized through an Affinity Diagram process which allowed for each individual express what they hoped the district could achieve as a result of going through the planning process as well as what they feared might happen. The results of the individual generation are then organized by theme and labeled so that the group has sense of what their peers are thinking. This information is helpful to the plan designers and facilitators as it makes evident what the values of the group are and points the way toward process adjustments that can be made to ensure that the process and plan outcomes are aligned with what the group wants and avoids those fears that they are most concerned with. The Vision, Mission and resulting planning themes from the group follow:

Vision

All Croton-Harmon students will develop the habits of mind and social skills to become life-long learners, able to contribute to the well-being of society.

Mission

We are committed to challenging all students, community inclusion and fostering respect. We will develop skills that enable students to become effective communicators, problem solvers and researchers who are independent learners responsible for their own learning.

Croton-Harmon Strategic Coherence Planning Launch Meeting – June 6th, 2016

Expectations for the Strategic Coherence Planning Process

Hopes	*Fears*
Consistency of philosophy and practice	Implementation will not live up to the plan's promise
Curriculum improvements and alignment	Consensus will be hard to find
Student Centered focus	That it will not focus on outcomes for kids
Community involvement and support	Process will be a waste
Process is efficient and productive	It will take too much time away from what matters
That it results in ownership/buy-in among a large portion of the community	It will be too prescriptive
A renewed commitment to the district Mission/Vision	It will cost too much money to implement
	Community/Stakeholders will not be involved meaningfully

The final element of the preparation stage for planning was a group consensus on the most critical attributes of a successful Croton-Harmon Graduate. Much as the existing district Vision and Mission provided a foundation for the start of the planning process, Croton-Harmon was also well positioned to quickly coalesce around a set of student skills and attributes because they had previously identified a general set as part of their previous goal setting and improvement planning. Using these items as a starting point, the Coherence Planning Team spent time exploring a variety of resources that contained the best available thinking about what will be required for student success in the near future. Participants reviewed articles by leading academic and business leaders, viewed and listened to speakers, videos and other items curated by the planning facilitator. Everyone had a chance to add their own thinking and resources to the process as well.

Based on those resources and the deliberations of the group, the Coherence Planning Team renewed their commitment to the district's identified skills and attributes list, ultimately deciding that the work done previously to identify these items was on target and did not need adjusting at this time. The group did respond to a facilitator request to do a value sort based on a combination of two factors – which of the items in each list was most important (would have the biggest impact on future success) and was either the least mastered or measured currently? The premise here was that having this additional sense of focus would help in determining which planning steps might be sequenced to ensure the fastest progress toward mastery and improvement. The cognitive attribute of critical and creative thinking for problem solving and the non-cognitive attribute of self-directed learning were the top identified priorities from each set (yellow highlighted).

Profile of a Graduate from Croton-Harmon Schools

Cognitive Attributes	Non-Cognitive Attributes
1. Communication (speaking, writing & listening) 2. Researchers (information literacy) 3. Critical and creative thinking for problem solving* 4. Resourcefulness – finding resources to help you solve problems	1. Respectful 2. Independent/self-directed - learners responsible for their own learning.** 3. Contributors to society 4. Collaboration

Phase II Data Collection and Analysis

With the district Mission and desired student skills identified, Phase I was complete and it was time to begin the Phase II data collection. This process is designed to determine the gap between the current state and the four articulated Coherence Outcomes as well as completing an analysis of a series of external data points that may have an impact on planning. To accomplish this task, the Strategic Coherence Planning Team was divided into five research and data collection groups. Assignments were determined by participant interest and a requirement that the groups be balanced between community representatives and district staff.

Group One Goals for Learning	Group Two Teaching for Learning	Group Three Measures of Learning	Group Four Supporting Systems	Group Five External Factors
Denise Baker	Ed Fuhrman	Lauren Scollins	Sarah Wellman	Andrea Furey
Michael Plotkin	Kelly Maloney	Barbara Ulm	Karen Gatto	Pam Morrison
Alan Capasso	Lauren Callaway	Deborah O'Connell	Iris Bugliosi	Tom Cunningham
Patrice Davidson	Dorothy Perrone	Dante Mancinelli	Diane Chaissan	Sara Langbert
	Sophia Mathews			Deba August
	Jeanne Schiermbock			Lori Phillips

Once formed, each group was tasked with collecting data that would explore the status of the district for each of the above identified challenges as framed through lens of the goals, measures, and practices required to meet these needs. Provided with guiding questions, these groups worked with volunteers and other district staff over a ten-week period to collect information, identify what the district was already doing to meet these challenges, and finally to report back to their peers about what was needed to close the gap between what was desired and what was actually happening in the district.

For common frames of reference, each of the first four groups was additionally asked to rate the performance of the district for their areas of focus. *Figure 9 on* the next page shows the scale that each group used to determine their respective ratings. A group's choices ran from a 0 that would indicate "no evidence" of the desired practice to a 4 that would show systemically improving performance. Because Group Five was dealing with only external data, they had no ratings to ascribe, rather they reported their findings as prioritized trends and implications in the following areas: Economics/Demographics, Mandates/Legislation, Historical Achievement Data Trends, Impact of Digital Tools for Learning, Local Context, and Other.

Score	Description
0 –Not Present	The Desired Coherence Outcome is non-existent
1 - Beginning	There may be some individual efforts or minimal group attempts, but there is no systemic evidence or process in place to support the existence of the Desired Coherence Outcome.
2 - Emergent	There have been systemic efforts to create the Desired Coherence Outcome, but its implementation is uneven and has yet to deliver meaningful changes in student or adult performance.
3 - Proficient	There has been a systemic effort to create the Desired Coherence Outcome and it is generally working. It is regularly creating evidence of meaningful changes in student and adult performance.
4. Excellent	There has been a systemic effort to create the Desired Coherence Outcome and it is functioning effectively. There have been meaningful changes in student and adult performance and there is evidence that data is driving further improvements in the system.

Figure 9

In addition to the group specific work, the district embarked on a community wide survey and focus group effort to gather supporting perception data. Over the data collection period, 76 parents took the parent/community survey, 20 teams of teachers took the teacher survey, and 624 students grades 7-12 took the student survey. Two different student focus groups of about ten students each were conducted, a teacher focus group of a similar number, and a parent-community group of about 12 people were also held. Finally, a few of the individual data collection teams ran their own focus groups and many conducted interviews with administrators and board members. Electronic curriculum maps were reviewed, particularly looking for elements of technology integration. Additional data was analyzed from the Clarity survey results for technology, which also surveyed

students, parents and teachers. All of these data were considered by all of the groups as they worked through the process and made their ratings and gap determinations.

Phase II Data Collection Outcomes and Phase III Results

At a data collection review gathering held on December 12th, 2016 each group presented their findings. While their peers listened, reflected and asked follow-up questions, groups shared the results of the work done over the previous two months. Each set of findings is presented in the next section of this report in the same format; first, there is an outline of the specific questions each group was tasked with answering, then a summary of their ratings, a description of the evidence they found that supports their rating and a determination of the current state and finally a statement about what the gaps between current practice and desired coherence outcomes are. It is the items identified in this last section, the gaps between current practice and the desired coherence outcomes, which will be prioritized and carried into Phase IV and V action planning. All the Group Five local data is listed as reported and is designed to be used to guide the deliberation and selection of the tactical strategies used to plan the gap closing efforts.

As noted, while each group presented, all members of the Strategic Coherence Planning Team were asked to track their own thinking and reactions to the data as they encountered it. Each reflection was recorded, shared, sorted and prioritized to identify additional context to guide action planning in the next phase. The results of this activity demonstrated that Strategic Coherence Planning Team believed that the district embarked on this planning effort on a foundation of strength. Among the district strengths identified by the group through this process included:

Strengths…

1. **We are proud of our well-articulated and coherent Mission and Vision.**
2. **We have a well-established goal oriented culture.**
3. **The district has a strong commitment to professional learning.**
4. **There is a well-developed assessment capacity within the district.**
5. **We have a commitment to data-based improvement processes.**
6. **There are an array of data tools (Gradebook and other data portals) and easy access to them.**

The group also tallied what they believed would be the most important barriers to success that they anticipated may block efforts for moving forward. The identification of these items will be critical when strategies are designed for the gap closing work in the next phase. The Strategic

Coherence Planning Team has recognized that if these barriers are not addressed, the likelihood of success moving forward is greatly diminished. Unlike the district strengths which were listed above in no particular order of importance, after identifying these barriers, the team took the time to discuss and prioritize the predicted impact of each of the identified barriers.

Restraining Forces, Most Critical Needs

1. **We need to be more focused and clearer about how improvement initiatives align with our district purpose and student goals.**
2. **A common understanding of key learning goals and assessment strategies is critical to making progress.**
3. **We need to build awareness of coherence and an understanding of goals and goal setting processes within the district.**
4. **There should be more stakeholders involved in goal setting processes.**
5. **Everyone would benefit for better communication of everything – especially goals and purpose.**
6. **There must be a more coherent assessment philosophy developed and put into practice.**
7. **We need to figure out to reduce the APPR distraction so we can focus on critical thinking.**
8. **How can we sharpen the vision and application of digital tools for learning?**
9. **We should improve the usability and reduce the challenges of the Rubicon Atlas curriculum tool.**

Finally, the group identified open questions it either wanted answered or explored before moving forward on Phase IV and V planning. District administration and the planning consultant will provide support for the Strategic Coherence Planning Team in answering these questions as the plans develop over time.

Questions….

1. **What are the differences, advantages, disadvantages of problem vs. project based learning?**
2. **Is the Mission differentiated for age in the different schools?**
3. **Can we ask or determine from graduates whether they feel they are college and career ready?**
4. **How do we overcome the opposing forces created by the APPR?**
5. **What is the difference between "technology" and "digital tools for learning?"**
6. **What is the most effective way to communicate between all of the stakeholders?**

7. **What is the best practice for including all stakeholders?**

8. **How do we balance teacher voice and alignment?**

9. **How do we best define the terms we use?**

10. **How do we communicate what the technology assessment resources do?**

Strategic Coherence Outcome One: Goals for Learning

The district has identified, defined and committed to supporting a focused set of appropriate student learning goals that will ensure student success in life, learning and work beyond school.

1. **Goal Setting Context and Philosophy** – there is a learning environment cultural emphasis that focuses on what is learned rather than simply was is covered or taught. Timelines and calendars are less important than having every child acquire the skills they need for success.

2. **Goal Setting Processes** – district, building/course and professional - they are focused, manageable, clearly tied to a data based need, and aligned through the Pre-K-12 system for both students and adults.

   a. The school/district has a history and practice of setting a focused set of appropriate student learning goals and working PreK-12 to achieve them.

   b. Grade level and/or course curriculum materials have clear and manageable observable goals for learning that are clearly described and are prioritized to encourage mastery for success (emphasis on engagement and learning) for all students.

   c. The school/district ensures that annual professional goals for all staff are set as a result of a process that is informed by an alignment with a focused set of appropriate student learning goals.

   d. The school/district ensures that annual school/district goals for performance are set as a result of a process that is informed by an alignment with associated appropriate student learning goals and collective professional learning needs.

3. **Goal Setting Support and Engagement** – students, parents, staff and other constituents are well informed regarding the rationale that inform the district's student learning goals at every level.

4. **Materials and Resources** – there is consistency and transparency in the materials that support the district's student goals for learning.

   a. Focused student goals for learning are consistent in all Pre-K-12 curriculum and program materials and have aligned expectations at the elementary, intermediate, middle and high school levels.

   b. There are easily accessible electronic curriculum and instructional resources for staff, parents and community in all academic areas that support the implementation of the district's student learning goals.

5. Other items or questions raised by the group…

Coherence Outcome One Summary Findings:

Indicator	Not Present 0	Beginning 1	Emergent 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
1. Goal Setting Context and Philosophy				■	
2. Goal Setting Processes				■	
3. Goal Setting Support and Engagement			■		
4. Materials and Resources				■	

Coherence Outcome One Findings Narrative:

Indicator One: Goal Setting Context and Philosophy- Proficient

Evidence of Current State:

1. Mission and Vision are connected to initiatives
2. Over the course of the last five years, the number of learning goals have been reduced to enhance focus on student learning outcomes--Student Engagement, Questioning & Discussion, Common Student Assessments, and Formative Feedback.
3. Formalized introduction of goals at District Opening day meeting
4. The pursuit of the goals are not rigidly bound by a timeline or an annual calendar. Monitoring of the goals sometimes requires adjustment to the timeline.
5. Goals are communicated and discussed during faculty meetings. All three building.
6. Goal attainment is promoted and enhanced through professional development in all three buildings.
7. All three buildings use the same goal setting process.
8. Teacher survey results: Consistent across the three buildings (q1) 95% of faculty are aware or very aware of district goal of 2015-2016.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. We need to examine data and make direct connections to the desired coherence outcomes.

Indicator Two: Goal Setting Processes – Proficient

Evidence of Current State:

1. Mission and Vision are connected to initiatives
2. Over the course of the last five years, the number of learning goals have been reduced to enhance focus on student learning outcomes--Student Engagement, Questioning & Discussion, Common Student Assessments, and Formative Feedback.
3. There is a process for crafting goals: The District Office sets annual goals with Administrative Council. The BOE provides some feedback to the Superintendent. Curriculum Coordinators are informed of the goals and play a role in the rollout effort.
4. Each school develops a building action plan in support of the district goal(s).
5. Departments and teacher teams implement aspects of the goals as they relate to needs of the students.
6. Departments further refine the action plan for their specific areas.
7. There is little evidence to suggest that teachers are aware of the goal setting process.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. There is little evidence to suggest that teachers are aware of the goal setting process. We need to improve stakeholders' understanding of the goal setting process.
2. There is little evidence to suggest other stakeholders are able to provide input in the goal setting process at the early stages.
3. We need to increase the use of data regarding key skills in driving the goal setting process and assessing the goal(s).

Indicator Three: Goal Setting Support and Engagement - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. The results and comparison of the results is that the community, parents, and student awareness of goal setting is relatively weak. Especially, in comparison to teacher perceptions.
2. The results from the survey of students and parent/community indicate that the impact of the goals are noticeable while goal awareness and communication thereof is in need of improvement.
3. Survey results also indicate that community members and parents see the need for additional resources devoted to updating and maintaining information relating to goals that is accessible to all.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Communications about goals needs to be clearer and less burdened with jargon.
2. Communication of goals needs to be put out to the community in a repetitious manner without creating fatigue and apathy.

Indicator Four: Materials and Resources - Proficient

Evidence of Current State:

1. In recent years, the number of goals have been reduced to one or two goals per year.
2. The availability of such materials/opportunities does not differ from building to building. The level and degree of implementation does.   There are some "initiatives" that gain more traction at one building and less time is dedicated to them at other buildings. The efforts and resources are also impacted by the developmental appropriateness at each of the three buildings.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Consider multi-year goals that are articulated in an action plan that is provided to every member of the Croton-Harmon Community.   Resources and materials that will be used or deemed necessary for the fulfillment of the goal should be a clear component of the plan.
2. Goals relating to critical thinking skills should have a clear connection to other things that the teachers and students are/have been doing. Be cognizant of how "new" things not related to the goal(s) distract people from the goal.
3. Goals should be revisited throughout the school year. Consider using communication to teachers, students, parents and community members that laud the work done, describe the stage we are at in the attainment of that goal and next steps.
4. Goals should be listed on the district and school websites. There is no link for this year's goal only previous years.

Strategic Coherence Outcome Two: Teaching for Learning

The district has committed to supporting instructional and adult learning strategies that ensure rigorous, digitally supported pedagogical experiences aligned with the district's student goals.

1. **Student Engagement in Rigorous, Higher-Order Thinking Activities**
   a. There is a high degree of faculty (staff) and administrator knowledge/understanding of higher-order thinking, the requirements of a positive culture for learning, and the importance of engaging students in extended rigorous learning experiences.
   b. There is an emphasis in the observation, feedback and evaluation processes that demonstrate the importance of student engagement and a positive learning culture and the associated elements of the observational practice rubric are weighted or focused on these elements as a priority in those processes.
   c. There is data and evidence that illustrate the degree to which all students have the opportunity to be engaged in rigorous, higher-order thinking experiences in every classroom.
   d. There is evidence that parents have had the opportunity to learn about what the district's expectations for instructional excellence are and are invited to be part of the conversation about how to maintain and support them.

2. **Digital Learning Practices**
   a. The policy and practices of the district are aligned with a digitally supported learning environment where all stakeholders have ready access to age appropriate tools.
   b. There is a high degree of faculty (staff) knowledge and understanding of how to design and facilitate digitally supported instructional experiences for students that support rigorous, higher-order thinking and sustained engagement.

3. **Professional Learning Practices**
   a. Professionals have the opportunity to pursue their own practice improvement goals (district, building or personal) through a variety of learning strategies that are consistent with standards of professional learning (job embedded, aligned with developing capacity in high-leverage instructional strategies).
   b. School/District professional learning plans provide for a variety of learning strategies that are consistent with standards of professional learning (job embedded, aligned with developing capacity in high-leverage instructional strategies).

Coherence Outcome Two Summary Findings:

Indicator	Not Present	Beginning	Emergent	Proficient	Excellent
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Student Engagement in Rigorous HOT			■		
2. Digital Learning Practices			■		
3. Professional Learning Practices			■		

Indicator One: Student Engagement in Rigorous Higher Order Thinking - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. There is no common definition of critical / creative thinking (See Outcome 1 - A and Outcome 3B)
2. 88% of our students report that they do not believe everyone in our schools have the same definition of creative and critical thinking.
3. 50% of students surveyed said that they are sometimes engaged in critical and creative thinking. Specific examples are provided in 1-C.
4. Students felt strongly that they are able to reflect on their grades. 61.19% felt that they are often able to reflect on their grades (1-D)
5. There was no evidence to indicate that the assessments themselves measure critical thinking and problem solving

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. There is no common district-wide definition of critical and creative thinking.
2. There is no common use of the term "project-based learning (see outcome 1e) and what the critical attributes of project-based learning are.
3. Students need more opportunity to practice and receive feedback prior to final assessments and/or projects (See Outcome 1-d).
4. There is a need to develop rubrics system wide to assess critical and creative thinking. We need to use the rubric to improve existing assessments and develop new ones for sharing.
5. Rubicon Atlas - Curriculum maps need to reflect project based learning experiences. Learning activities and assessments need to be included in the curriculum maps.
6. Professional development in the area of project based learning needs to be provided

7. Teachers need to develop project based learning opportunities in all curricular areas that address critical thinking and problem solving

Indicator Two: Digital Learning Practices – **Emergent**

Evidence of Current State:

1. A review of curriculum maps indicates that technology integration is rarely noted (Outcome 2-e)
2. Only handful of teachers have received PD in technology (Outcome 2-b)
3. 60% of our teachers say they are very comfortable with integrating technology into their classroom (2-A)
4. 40% of teachers report that they frequently use technology to support metacognition (2-A)
5. Communication with community regarding technology is provided through Principal's coffee, teacher & principal newsletters, teacher websites and articles in district publications.
6. Evidence collected does not suggest that technology is being used for critical thinking, problem solving and creativity

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Need to include technology integration into curriculum maps
2. Need to create scope and sequence of technology skills and content grades 5-12
    1. Need to share scope and sequence with parents
3. Parents need to be made aware of how technology is being integrated into curriculum and assessments
    1. Share student work

Indicator Three: Professional Learning Practices - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. No evidence suggests that teachers pursue their own goals for practice improvement
2. 60% of teachers report that curriculum and program goals reflect the key learning goals set for the district (3A)
3. 90% of teachers indicate that they set professional learning goals as a department or grade level each year (3A)
4. The district provides dedicated time for teachers to meet at each buildings level.
5. Tri-States training, Olweus Anti-Bullying training, Google Training and other trainings provided (3-C)
6. Introduction of LATIC (3-H)
7. The district provides dedicated time for teachers to meet at each buildings level.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Need to provide opportunities for individuals to pursue their own professional learning goals that are in alignment with the building and district

Strategic Coherence Outcome Three: Measures of Learning

The district uses and reports on appropriate and balanced measures of student and adult success that are aligned with its student learning goals.

1. **Assessment Philosophy**:
   a. There is a unified Pre-K-12 assessment philosophy and system that is primarily focused on student learning growth and the student's attainment of the district's primary goals for learning.
   b. There are transparent differences and clarity between the formative and summative assessment instruments used in the district and general agreement on the purposes, needs and differences between them.
   c. All organized formative/summative assessments support either growth or accountability and are appropriately balanced (80/20) in their application.

2. **Assessment Capacity**:
   a. There is a system for capturing standardized and non-standardized data related to the district's primary goals for learning.
   b. There is evidence of the effective use of data collection and analysis tools which inform changes in practice to improve student learning.
   c. District staff can construct effective rubrics (measuring what you value), designing rubric aligned tasks (connecting it to instructional practice), and use scoring protocols (build capacity to judge student work) to ensure that non-standardized measures are useful in the improvement process.

3. **Performance Data**: all appropriate performance data is easily accessible to all interested stakeholders, is reflective of district priorities, and is used regularly to improve practice at the classroom, building and district level.

4. **Professional Measures of Learning**:   The data collected and used as part of the teacher evaluation and support processes reflect current student performance on critical goals for learning and other established district student learning priorities.

5. **School/District Measures of Learning**:   The data collected and used as part of district and building improvement planning reflect current student performance on critical goals for learning and other established district student learning priorities.

6. Other items or questions raised by the group…

Coherence Outcome Three Findings Summary:

Indicator	Not Present	Beginning	Emergent	Proficient	Excellent
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Assessment Philosophy			■		
2. Assessment Capacity				■	
3. Performance Data			■		
4. Professional Measures of Learning			■		
5. School/District Measures of Learning				■	

Indicator One: Assessment Philosophy- Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. With the creation of the K-12 grading committee, there are efforts to create a district definition of assessment through the identification of the Croton-Harmon Grading Philosophy/Purposes.
2. With the standards-based report card work which is K-8, there is evidence of a uniform approach to using rubrics to drive the report card process.
3. There is evidence of transparent differences and clarity between formative and summative assessments. However, based on (focus group data; Rubicon Atlas), more formative assessments may be required to drive student growth.
4. Not all assessments are recorded in Rubicon Atlas therefore, transparency could be increased.
5. Reviewing the 80/20 split between formative and summative data, formative could increase.
6. Reviewing the district focus approaching the development of assessment (template) part of the protocol calls for teachers reviewing their assessments in each unit.
7. Based on this review, see if there is balance (formative/summative), as well as a balance of varying types of assessments.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Need for a formal definition of assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. Adopt a formal definition of the following: critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving. This should include training and communication to all stakeholders (students, parents, community).
2. Adopt a district definition of performance tasks.
3. The district should define its assessment philosophy as it identified its grading purposes/philosophy. With the development of the K-8 standards based report card, teachers spend a great deal of time discussing the use of formative assessments in the grading process.

Indicator Two: Assessment Capacity – Proficient

Evidence of Current State:

1. The district is moving towards Alpine Achievement from the Data Warehouse. In the past teachers would view data from two sources (grade book and Data Warehouse). Alpine Achievement will house the bulk of our data moving forward.
2. ESchool Data is being used to record student data and learning.
3. Training in RTI teams on how to monitor student learning. Data Team Training- how are we recording and revisiting data
4. For three years the district has been working with LCI to develop assessments, rubrics, etc. Each school has an RtI (Response to Intervention) or data team. These data teams use the resources from eSD, Data Warehouse, Ren Star etc. This year we are moving to Alpine Achievement which will house more of the data in one place.
5. Curriculum Teacher Leaders have been trained with LCI to help facilitate the creation of rubrics, then they share this work with their departments, and then meet as cross building departments (and this year multiple departments) to share the same message.
6. SELC and Social-Emotional Focus - district and building level at risk meetings.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Further develop our understanding of the power of Alpine Achievement and work with the company to house more data. This will enable teachers to develop summary reports with multiple sources of data.
2. Continue training efforts so that all teachers in the CH systems can reflect deeply on their performance tasks, rubric development and examine of student work protocols (penetrate the entire system). These training efforts would be further evidence to inform changes in student learning.

Indicator Three: Performance Data - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. As a district we have begun to use the eSD grade book portal.
2. We have granted access to the high school students and all parents.
3. Recently we granted access to the middle school students (grades 7 & 8).
4. There is inconsistent data entry which may not always provide parents and students with up-to-date information of student progress and growth.
5. NYS Data and STAR data is posted on the portal.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Continue to provide teacher training on the eSD grade book.
2. Identify specific performance data linked to critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving.
3. There is evidence of some data relative to these; however, it is not noted and/or communicated uniformly throughout the district.

Indicator Four: Professional Measures of Learning - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. As part of the APPR process, we use STAR data as a part of the growth measure (K-8) and the ELA Common Core Regents exam is used for 9-12 teachers.
2. As part of the APPR process, in CH we use the Danielson Rubric which has an emphasis on student performance, critical thinking, questioning, and student-directed learning.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Identify the specific links to critical and creative thinking for problem solving in teacher practice rubric. Spend time as a district to examine what this looks like in practice.

Indicator Five: School and District Measures of Learning - Proficient

Evidence of Current State:

1. District and building level goal setting processes are in place for several years. These goals are set by reviewing data and identifying areas of need.
2. Structures in place to share this information with district faculty (admin council, curriculum coordinators).

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. District Goals should be communicated/shared with the students and community.

Strategic Coherence Outcome Four: Systems Alignment and Coherence

The district aligns its supporting organizational systems to support the acquisition of its student learning goals.

1. Leadership/Mission Focus-
   a. There is a well-articulated Mission (and other possible supporting statements) that guide not only regular goal setting and instructional improvement processes but also systems decision making and organizational evaluations.
   b. There are aligned and coherent leadership connections that bring all of the systems of work together to support the pursuit of the Mission and priority student learning goals from the individual, to the building, and to the district level.
2. Policy & Regulation - The Board of Education works with the Superintendent to craft and apply policy that supports the district's pursuit of its Mission and priority student learning goals.
3. Community Engagement - The district's many stakeholders believe that they are meaningfully involved, engaged and respected by the leadership structures in the district.
4. Resource Deployment – District budgets and resources are developed and defended based on alignment with articulated goals for learning and demonstrated Mission-based need.

Coherence Outcome Four Findings Summary:

Indicator	Not Present 0	Beginning 1	Emergent 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
1. Leadership/Mission Focus				▓	
2. Policy and Regulation			▓		
3. Community Engagement			▓		
4. Resource Deployment			▓		

Indicator One: Leadership/Mission Focus- Proficient

Evidence of Current State:

1. Mission and vision guide decisions made at all meetings at district level such as SELC, At-risk meetings, Administrative council, budget meetings, Support services admin. Council, DERT, administrative goal setting, BOE goal setting etc.
2. Individual teachers are not always in tune with mission and vision when ordering materials or selecting professional development.
3. APPR is not perceived as being in alignment with vision/mission by all stakeholders
4. Discussions at Admin Council- are positive since we have begun asking "what are you doing in your building that will affect others?"
5. Teacher evaluation system-So much time has been devoted to this initiative that it has left little free time for other initiatives
6. Curriculum coordinator work- This is a positive area
7. SELC looks at the alignment of activities in each building - this is a positive area
8. Departments work collaboratively such as transportation staff are trained by SE consultant,
9. summer work for students planned collaboratively by Facilities and PPS - RISE students assembled Go Buckets
10. Technology purchases/planning/curriculum development coordinated with Dir. of Technology and PPS
11. When grants are written, monies are included to support agreed upon professional development

Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Statements regarding Illuminating the Future, Schoolhouse, Forward Path can be distracting from vision/mission
2. Some staff share that multiple initiatives i.e., Rubicon Atlas, grading, RtI, LATIC, IDE, LCI, cause confusion, metacognition, science work
3. More clear, concise communication about the impact of systems (Tri-State) and instructional processes
4. More open involvement of stakeholders in understanding the instructional processes
5. Building schedules prevent aligned connections i.e. block scheduling, A-B days, 6 day cycle vs. letter days at CHHS
6. More sharing of student work or best practice between buildings would help
7. More open process/protocol for encouraging more voices in leadership positions
8. Increased opportunity for multi -disciplinary sharing and planning between teachers within the school and between schools
9. Per parent survey, overwhelming response that goals are not clearly communicated and type of communication is inefficient

Indicator Two: Policy and Regulations - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. Meeting with the Board: policy committee, revising the policies, board has to respond to current events, is there an attempt to stay focused on the mission (critical and creative thinking) (mission report?)
2. Teacher Survey=board will be somewhat likely to play a role in crafting policy (12), not likely (5), very likely (3)
3. Tri-State meetings and reports, focus on critical thinking
4. curriculum departments, curriculum coordinators, building planning committees, liaison
5. Curriculum departments meetings focused on district goals set in August meeting , monthly
6. Tri-state visits

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Build into already established systems, protocols to stay focused on the mission/vision
2. Weekly communication from administrators etc. re: progress toward district goals
3. Administrative agendas for focused curriculum coordinators must continue to focus on district goals

Indicator Three: Community Engagement - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. Surveys, the parent forum, Curriculum meetings, Building planning, Liaison
2. <u>Parents</u>: more feedback, timely, restructuring conferences, back to school night, more effective communication,
3. Principal Coffees, Black Cow Board of Ed
4. Faculty meetings-once a month
5. Cross building-3x a year
6. Curriculum- Meetings 1 a year
7. Newsletters, Portal,
8. Parent survey: Engaged: Not at all: 14% Somewhat: 48%, Satisfactory: 27%, High:11% out of 79 responses
   - 70% said we could do better about meaningfully involved
   - Working with leaders: 22% doing okay, 80% we could do better

- Principal's Coffees 50%-50%, once month per building
- Opinion valued: 64% Somewhat (50 out of 78 people)
- Informed: 52% Somewhat

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Revise and streamline communication
2. Process to bring in/value contradictory viewpoints
3. Numerous outreach efforts obscure the goal, streamline outreach efforts to focus on goal
4. Encourage, revise/review outreach efforts to allow for input (back to school)

Indicator Four: Community Engagement - Emergent

Evidence of Current State:

1. During budget prep (usually in January), administrators discuss potential programs they would like to implement in the coming year. If possible, these funds are included depending on overall state aid, etc.
2. Grants are formulated in a similar manner to support programs for students and professional development for staff to support the programs.

Key Gaps Between Current Practice and Desired Outcome:

1. Cost of subs
2. Lack of PD in the area of critical and creative thinking
3. Limited budget resources
4. Having teachers out of their classrooms for extended times
5. Review daily/weekly teacher schedules for efficiency, and resource development
6. Tax levy cap prohibits districts from having local control
7. protocols/processes about budget being focused on district goal

Group Five - Part Two: Local Context

Gaps/Challenges:

- We don't have enough empirical information on how prepared our students are for later life in college and career.

- The majority of teachers and students believe that technology is fundamental to teaching and learning but also believe there is a lack of training in how to use the technology effectively in the classroom. The challenge is to assess how professional development is brought into the classroom.

- How do we as a district keep all stakeholders informed and involved?

- Do we need to provide more support with the health, social, emotional & welfare of our students?
  - Do students have equitable access to valuable after-school, enrichment and/or other personal growth opportunities that are critical to college and career readiness and success?

- Are educational programs limited by budgetary concerns and mandated laws?

Opportunities

- The new legislative landscape may give the district more local control.
- Increase engagement with the community to involve students in authentic tasks and experiences to improve their learning.

Improving Coherence:

At a planning meeting on January 13th, the district staff who serve on the Strategic Coherence Planning met to review all of the suggested gap closing needs from the four Strategic Coherence Outcomes reviewed at the December meeting. After considering the contextual data and the district's strengths and needed areas for growth, the group made a commitment to a series of priority actions. The overriding concern in these deliberations was making sure that staff and students have the time and resources need to make this transition and to avoid the change fatigue that has plagued public school reform over the last several years. The results of those deliberations are seen in the numbers which follow each gap closing needs (these represent votes from a structured prioritization process) and the highlight colors (yellow indicates a top priority while the turquoise represents a second tier priority). The top identified items in each of the four areas were combined and sequenced to produce the six most critical strategic focus outcomes which follow in the "Planning for Improvement" section.

Strategic Coherence Outcome One: Goals for Learning - Potential Five Year Gap Closing Needs:

A. We need to examine data and how it relates to the desired coherence outcome. 6
B. We need to improve teachers and stakeholders' understanding of the goal setting process. 22
C. We need opportunities for other stakeholders to provide input in the goal setting process at the early stages. 8
D. Increase the use of data in driving the goal setting process and assessing the goal(s). 24
E. Implement communications about goals that are comprised of fewer and bolder words. 46
F. Communication of goals needs to be put out to the community in a repetitious manner without creating fatigue and apathy. 5
G. The level and degree of implementation of school goals vary by school building.   14
H. Consider multi-year goals that are articulated in an action plan that is provided to every member of the Croton-Harmon Community.   Resources and materials that will be used or deemed necessary for the fulfillment of the goal should be a clear component of the plan. 13
I. Goals relating to critical thinking skills should have a clear connection to other things that the teachers and students are/have been doing. Be cognizant of how "new" things not related to the goal(s) distract people from the goal. 52
J. Goals should be revisited throughout the school year. 13
K. Consider using communication to teachers, students, parents and community members that laud the work done, describe the stage we are at in the attainment of that goal and next steps. 12

Strategic Coherence Outcome Two: Teaching for Learning - Potential Five Year Gap Closing Needs:

A. [There is no common definition of critical / creative thinking (See Outcome 1 - A and Outcome 3B)]

B. There was no evidence to indicate that the assessments themselves measure critical thinking and problem solving 34
C. There is no common use of the term "project-based learning (see outcome 1e) and what the critical attributes of project-based learning are. 45
D. More opportunity for students to practice and receive feedback prior to final assessments and/or projects (See Outcome 1-d). 34
E. Rubicon Atlas - Curriculum maps need to reflect project based learning experiences. Learning activities and assessments need to be included in the curriculum maps. 18
F. Professional development in the area of project based learning needs to be provided 24
G. Teachers need to develop project based learning opportunities in all curricular areas that address critical thinking and problem solving 36
H. A review of curriculum maps indicates that technology integration is rarely noted (Outcome 2-e)
I. Only handful of teachers have received PD in technology (Outcome 2-b)
J. Evidence collected does not suggest that technology is being used for critical thinking, problem solving and creativity 5
K. Individuals pursue their own professional learning goals that are in alignment with the building and district goals for critical thinking 13

Strategic Coherence Outcome Three: Measures of Learning - Potential Five Year Gap Closing Needs:

A. Adopt a formal definition of assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. 12
B. Adopt a formal definition of the following: critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving. This should include training and communication to all stakeholders (students, parents, community). 71 (See Strategy One)
C. [Adopt a district definition of performance tasks.]
D. There is a need to develop rubrics system wide to assess critical and creative thinking. We need to use the rubric to improve existing assessments and develop new ones for sharing. 33
E. The district should define its assessment philosophy as it identified its grading purposes/philosophy. With the development of the K-8 standards based report card, teachers spend a great deal of time discussing the use of formative assessments in the grading process. 22
F. [Further develop our understanding of the power of Alpine Achievement and work with the company to house more data. This will enable teachers to develop summary reports with multiple sources of data.]
G. Continue training efforts so that all teachers in the CH systems can reflect deeply on their performance tasks, rubric development and examine of student work protocols (penetrate the entire system). These training efforts would be further evidence to inform changes in student learning. 23
H. Identify specific performance data linked to critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving. 22
I. There is evidence of some data relative to these; however, it is not noted and/or communicated uniformly throughout the district. 4

J. Identify the specific links to critical and creative thinking for problem solving in teacher practice rubric. Spend time as a district to examine what this looks like in practice. 46

K. [District Goals should be communicated/shared with the students and community.]

Strategic Coherence Outcome Four: Aligned Systems of Support – Potential Five Year Gap Closing Needs:

A. Statements regarding Illuminating the Future, Schoolhouse, Forward Path can be distracting from vision/mission = 7

B. Some staff share that multiple initiatives i.e., Atlas Rubicon, grading, RtI, LATIC, IDE, LCI, cause confusion, metacognition, science work = 49

C. More clear, concise communication about the impact of systems (Tri-State) and instructional processes = 41

D. More open involvement of stakeholders in understanding the instructional processes = 36

E. Building schedules prevent aligned connections i.e. block scheduling, A-B days, 6 day cycle vs. letter days at CHHS = 31

F. More open process/protocol for encouraging more voices in leadership positions =16

G. [Goals are not clearly communicated and type of communication is inefficient]

H. Lack of established systems, protocols to stay focused on the mission/vision = 27

I. [Revise and streamline communication and create outreach efforts obscure the goal, streamline outreach efforts to focus on goal]

J. Encourage, revise/review outreach efforts to allow for input (back to school) = 5

K. Resource constraints = 18

Priority Strategic Five Year Coherence Needs/Strategies:

Strategy One: **Forge a consensus on definitions and meaning of critical and creative thinking for problem solving.** *(Outcome 3, letter B)*

Strategy Two: **Build an aligned goal setting process relating to critical and creative thinking for problem solving and have a clear connection to other things that the teachers and students are/have been doing.** *(Outcome 1, letter I)*

Strategy Three: **Ensure there is a common definition for Problem and Project Based Learning in support of the critical and creative thinking for problem solving and that all students have opportunities to pursue/practice them in all curriculum areas.** *(Outcome 2, letters B & G)*

Strategy Four: **Develop a district-wide assessment system that captures student performance for critical and creative thinking for problem solving and allows for feedback and accountability for skill obtainment.** *(Outcome 2, letter B & Outcome 3, letter B)*

Strategy Five: **Incorporate the practice and support of critical and creative thinking for problem solving into the teacher observation rubric and instructional feedback process.** *(Outcome 3, letter J)*

Strategy Six: **Create a comprehensive communications structure and strategy to improve teachers and stakeholders understanding of the goal setting process and the ongoing efforts to align and connect long-term improvement efforts to mission and vision of a successful graduate.** *(Outcome 1, letters I & E, Outcome 4, letters B, C, & D)*

Strategy One: Forge a consensus on definitions and meaning of critical and creative thinking for problem solving. *(Outcome 3, letter B).*

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
Definitions of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving (learning skills) vary throughout the district	Create a district definition for critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving	Adopt a district definition of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving.	Communicate to all stakeholders the district definitions of the learning skills. Each term will have a clear definition and a training plan will be clearly articulated.

Impacted Systems: Cross Building (staff), students and parents

Driving	Restraining
• Curriculum Department Meeting Time & Administrative Council • These terms are defined in other standardized references	• Mindsets • Varying level of definitions depending on the audience

Actions for Moving Forward:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Explore industry definitions of critical and creative thinking and problem solving, such as P21's definitions: (click on link) P21 Definitions.docx	Research of P21 and other sources such as EdLeader21 will provide a baseline for the Croton-Harmon process of developing district definitions.	Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers	2017-2018

2	Following the process the district employed for the development of the district-wide definition of metacognition, the assistant superintendent and curriculum coordinators will lead this work	A district-wide definition of critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving will be developed	Croton-Harmon Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers	2017-2018
3	Align the work with the district's actions to support the social and emotional development of students.		Croton-Harmon Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers	Ongoing
4	Develop global K-12 rubrics to support the newly developed definitions of critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving	A K-12 global rubric for each area (critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving) is developed	Croton-Harmon Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers	2017-2018 2019-2019 2019-2020
5	Based on the global rubrics, develop elementary, middle and high school specific rubrics for critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving	Elementary, middle and high school rubrics are developed	Croton-Harmon Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers	2017-2018 2018-2019 2019-2020
6	Revisit and edit existing definitions of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving	Refine definitions of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving will result	Croton-Harmon Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and Teachers	2018-2019 2019-2020
7	Share common definitions with administration, staff, students and community	All stakeholders will have access to the definitions	Administrative Council	2017-218 (begin) 2018-2019
8	Continue (Begin?) to design performance tasks and other assessments that use the rubrics to assess students in the areas of critical/creative thinking and problem solving		Curriculum Coordinators, teachers	2017-2018 and beyond
9	Link assessment data from these assessments to the assessment data in the Alpine system.		Director of Technology	2019-2020

10	Evaluate the progress of the plan and adjust as necessary			Ongoing

Strategy Two: **Build an aligned goal setting process relating to critical and creative thinking for problem solving and have a clear connection to other things that the teachers and students are/have been doing.** *(Outcome 1, letter I)*

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
Currently, broad goals are set by the administrative team using district-wide data. After these goals are set building-level leadership creates goals/actions plans to align with the broad district goals.	Identify the stakeholders involved in the goal setting process (both district/ building level) specific to critical and creative thinking for problem solving.	Stakeholder groups set broad goals specific to critical and creative thinking for problem solving. Building-level teams develop goals/action plans to align with broad goals.	Each year, broad district goals are developed followed by specific building-level goals and action plans. There is a calendar that includes an analysis of goal attainment prior to setting the new school year's goal.
Currently, the district's professional development plan does not specifically address the strategic planning goal of critical and creative thinking for problem solving.	Develop the professional development plan with critical and creative thinking for problem solving at the core.	Review the professional development plan with the Administrative Council and Curriculum Coordinators. Indicate areas specific to critical and creative thinking for problem solving.	Each year, the professional development plan will be updated to ensure alignment to goals and a focus on critical and creative thinking for problem solving.
Croton-Harmon has vibrant classrooms and curricula. In the absence of a district-wide definition of critical and creative thinking for problem solving, there is a wide array of "what this looks like" in the classroom. We pose the question, "How can our educators become more explicit about critical and creative thinking for problem solving?"	Identify what our classrooms look like when students are thinking critically and creatively for problem solving.	Curriculum coordinators will report on the performance tasks that reflect student engagement with thinking critically and creatively for problem solving.	Identify the profile and skills of students thinking critically and creatively for problem solving at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Curriculum maps will continually be revised to reflect student engagement with thinking critically and creatively for problem solving.

Impacted Systems:

Driving	Restraining
Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	Operationalizing process to include various stages of goal development Time

Actions for Moving Forward:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Administrative Council will serve as the district-level team setting broad goals. In the spring, Administrative Council will identify goal(s) for the next school year, being sure that goals are compatible with the district's on-going work on supporting emotional and social development of students.	Yearly goals specific to critical and creative thinking for problem solving will be developed	Administrative Council	Each Year
2	Building-level leaders and Curriculum Coordinators will develop goals/action plans that align with the district-level goal(s).	Building specific goals/action plans will be developed to align with the district goal(s)	Building level leadership and Curriculum Coordinators	August/ September of Each Year

3	Curriculum Coordinators will share the goal(s)/action plans with departments for feedback. Curriculum Coordinators will gather information from departments specific to the type of professional development opportunities the district should include for goal attainment	Feedback will be received which will refine the building specific goals Feedback will be received specific to the professional development plan	Curriculum Coordinators and teachers	August/ September of Each Year
4	Administrative Council will review feedback and identify elements of the professional development plan. Administrative Council will identify resources needed for goal attainment Professional development will include identifying the profile and skills of students thinking critically and creatively for problem solving at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Curriculum maps will continually be revised to reflect student engagement with thinking critically and creatively for problem solving. Quality curriculum map review will take place led by "fellows" (stipended positions) who will use quality curriculum rubrics and tools in Rubicon Atlas to examine curriculum maps for quality.	A yearly professional development plan will be created specific to goal attainment Curriculum maps will be revised to reflect the goal of critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Administrative Council District Curriculum Review Team Curriculum "fellows"	Each Year

| 5 | Administrative Council will share draft plan with teachers | All teachers will have an opportunity to review district goal(s), building level goals and action plans, and the professional development plan | Admin. Council | Each Year |
| 6 | Evaluate the progress of the plan and adjust as necessary | | | On-going |

Strategy Three: **Ensure there is a common definition for Problem and Project Based Learning in support of the critical and creative thinking for problem solving and that all students have opportunities to pursue/practice them in all curriculum areas.** *(Outcome 2, letters B & G)*

Outcome Definition/Innovation Configuration:

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
The Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom (LATIC) Model utilizes a definition of problem based learning at its core.	Review the LATIC model definition of problem based learning. Incorporate this definition and tenets of the model into a district-wide definition of problem/project based learning.	Using the district definition of critical and creative thinking for problem solving, expand the LATIC definitions to include problem/project based learning	A K-12 definition of problem/ project based learning will be utilized consistently and evident in all performance tasks.

Impacted Systems:

Driving	Restraining
Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	Time

Actions for Moving Forward:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Administrative Council and Curriculum Coordinators will discuss the LATIC model with all teachers and reinforce the definition of problem based learning as described by the LATIC model	All teachers will start from the same point in terms of a standard definition	Administrative Council and Curriculum Coordinators	2017-2018
2	Following the process the district employed for the development of the district-wide definition of metacognition, the assistant superintendent and curriculum coordinators will lead this work	A district-wide definition of problem based and project based learning will be developed	Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and teachers	2017-2018
3	Using performance tasks and student work and teacher feedback, review/refine the definitions	An edited district-wide definition of problem /project based learning	Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and teachers	2018-2019
4	Revisit and edit existing definitions of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving	Refine definitions of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving will result	Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators and teachers	2018-2019 and Beyond
5	In Rubicon Atlas, identify learning and assessments that are project based as well as learning and assessments that integrate technology	Project-based assessments and assessments that integrate technology will be identified in Rubicon Atlas	Curriculum Coordinators and teachers	2019-2020
6	Evaluate the progress of the plan and adjust as necessary			Ongoing

Strategy Four: **Develop a district-wide assessment system that captures student performance for critical and creative thinking for problem solving and allows for feedback and accountability for skill obtainment.** *(Outcome 2, letter B & Outcome 3, letter B)*

Outcome Definition/Innovation Configuration:

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
Currently Croton-Harmon has a robust assessment system which includes a wide-array of assessment types	Inventory and identify assessments K-12, which specifically assess critical and creative thinking for problem solving - understanding that this may result in portions of assessments addressing the goal	Inventories, identification and production of assessments on each level: elementary, middle and high school will continue	A K-12 district wide assessment system is in place and it shows that all Croton-Harmon students have developed and mastered the critical skills.

Impacted Systems:

Driving	Restraining
Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	Time

Actions for Moving Forward:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Revise the assessment types in Rubicon Atlas to reflect the types of assessments in the district (so there are common assessment types grades K12).-Check with Rubicon on what is possible	Assessment types will be common district-wide and used to appropriately identify specific assessments	Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators, Teachers	2017-2018 and Beyond
2	Inventory current assessments K-12	An inventory of current assessments using the revised assessment types (from step one) will be produced which reflects current assessment practices	Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	2018-2019
3	Identify specific measures of critical and creative thinking and problem solving using newly defined terms	Current assessments will be tagged to indicate if it is a measure of critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	2018-2019
4	Develop assessments (if needed) to specifically address critical and creative thinking for problem solving and label them appropriately in Rubicon Atlas	Assessments will be developed (whole or part) to reflect critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	2017-2018 2018-2019 2019-2020
5	Create a K-12 assessment inventory outlining the specific goal area	A final draft will be created to reflect the assessments specific to critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	2020-2021
6	Share the K-12 draft will all teachers	All teachers will have the opportunity to review the K-12 systems approach to assessing critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	2021-2022
7	Evaluate the progress of the plan and adjust as necessary			Ongoing
8				

Strategy Five:
Incorporate the practice and support of critical and creative thinking for problem solving into the teacher observation rubric and instructional feedback process. *(Outcome 3, letter J)*

Outcome Definition/Innovation Configuration:

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
Educators have various levels of understanding of what critical and creative thinking for problem solving means and what it looks like in their classrooms as described in the Danielson rubric	Some educators have an understanding of what critical and creative thinking for problem solving looks like in their classrooms as described in the Danielson rubric	Most educators have an understanding of what critical and creative thinking for problem solving looks like in their classrooms as described in the Danielson rubric	All educators will have a common understanding of what critical and creative thinking for problem solving looks like in their classroom as described in the Danielson rubric

Impacted Systems:

Driving	Restraining
Administrative Council Curriculum Coordinators Teachers	Time

Actions for Moving Forward:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When

1	Identify the components of the Danielson rubric that support critical and creative thinking for problem solving.	All educators will have a common understanding of how the evaluation model describes practice regarding critical and creative thinking for problem solving.	Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators	2018-2019
2	Share with the faculty at large for feedback		Administrative Council, Curriculum Coordinators	2018-2019
3	Provide professional development on these components and generate examples of learning activities related to each of these components that illustrate critical and creative thinking for problem solving.	Educators will gain a common understanding of the criteria that are present in quality examples of critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Assistant superintendent, consultants	2018-2019 2019-2020
4	Administrators focus on identifying evidence of critical and creative thinking for problem solving for these components in their observations.	Administrators will have a common understanding of evidence of critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Administrative Team	2019-2020
5	Gather baseline data- percentage of teachers at levels 1-4- in OASIS	Baseline level of performance identified for each school regarding critical and creative thinking for problem solving	Building administrators	2020-2021
6	From this baseline data, set targets for the future.		Building Administrators	2020-2021
7	Evaluate the progress of the plan and adjust as necessary			Ongoing

Strategy Six:
Create a comprehensive communications structure and strategy to improve teachers and stakeholders understanding of the goal setting process and the ongoing efforts to align and connect long-term improvement efforts to mission and vision of a successful graduate. *(Outcome 1, letters I & E, Outcome 4, letters B, C, & D)*

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
Most teachers and stakeholders think the Central Office and Administration create/design goals. There is limited understanding of this Strategic Coherence Committee's goal/purpose and the process.	Some teachers and stakeholders understand the goal setting process, their role in it and support it. Teachers and stakeholders can communicate the district's goal setting process to others.	Most teachers and stakeholders understand the goal setting process, their role in it and support it. Teachers and stakeholders can communicate the district's goal setting process to others.	All teachers and stakeholders understand the goal setting process, their role in it and support it. Teachers and stakeholders can communicate the district's goal setting process to others.
Inconsistent communications to various stakeholders relative to district goals and therefore, mixed levels of understanding of the goals			Clear understanding of district goals (critical & creative thinking for problem solving) by all stakeholders through effective communication for a fully engaged educational community

Driving	Restraining
*Board of Education *Teacher Leaders *Administration *CTA *PTA's Desire for better communication	*Too many voices *Conflicting priorities *Gossip/Rumor mill *Expectations of APPR *Unsure of who is listening (too much information- not enough read/understood) Push back on change

Strategies for Moving Forward:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	ROLL-OUT OF DISTRICT GOAL AND STRATEGIC PLAN: *Define the goal setting process *Create a PR and Communication Plan *Regular updates on the progress towards the goal *Share the work of the Strategic Coherence *Committee during meetings: Faculty Back to School Nights PTA Board of Education Parent Coffees Curriculum Meetings	All educators will have a common definition of the goal setting process The school community will have a common understanding of the goal setting process The school community will have a common understanding of the goal setting process	Administrative Team Public Relations Administrative team, curriculum coordinators	2017-2018
2	Regular updates of progress towards meeting goal(s) at the Board Meetings	The board of education will receive regularly scheduled updates of progress towards achieving the district goal(s)	Administrative Council	2017-2018 and Beyond
3	Clearly defining the goal	Understanding the goal	Administrative Team	On or Before 2017-2018
4	Identify key words surrounding the goal and develop a concrete statement (with fewer/bolder words) which explains the goal	Being able to hone in on key points. Create a concise statement that explains the goal	Administrative Team/Public Relations	On or Before 2017-2018
6	Test the concrete statement with a focus group to ensure it is understandable by various stakeholders until a clear goal statement emerges	This will result in a goal with clear and concise language understood by all stakeholders	Teachers/students/parents	2017-2018

9	Communicate the end result (final version of the goal) to all stakeholders in the system	This will result in the goal being communicated	Administrative Team/Teachers/Public Relations	2017-2018
10	Continue to explore philosophies that are compatible with the district's mission, vision, and goals (for example, International Baccalaureate (IB) so as to organize and support the district's goal(s)	CET to investigate IB program	CET Staff	2017-2018
11	Evaluate the progress of the plan and adjust as necessary			Ongoing

Glossary of Terms

AIS – Academic Intervention Services – These are services provided to eligible students who are struggling academically and include additional instruction or counseling as examples.

Alpine – An online software tool used to analyze district student performance data for improvement purposes.

APPR – Annual Professional Performance Review – a controversial measure of teacher performance that was established through New York State's Race to the Top Educational Improvement Plan.

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress – AYP is a component of No Child Left Behind and is defined in New York State as meeting the goals set for Croton-Harmon by the New York State Department of Education.

BLT – Building Level Team – Teams of teachers, parents and administrators who develop annual plans for addressing building level academic and program goals.

Community Expectations for Learning – goals for learning (usually related to very important skills like problem solving or communication) that are generally regarded as the most important attributes that students should be able to master as a result of attending the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District – this term is used by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges in their accreditation process.

Curriculum and instructional alignment – degree to which the materials and teaching used to educate students are focused on the same things from grade level to grade level, year to year, and school to school.

Croton-Harmon Instructional Practices Rubric – The framework that administrators use to evaluate the instructional practices of Croton-Harmon teachers through the teacher evaluation process

Differentiation – A strategy of providing different teaching strategies for different children – in essence trying to match instruction to the interests or learning styles of individual students.

DLT – District Leadership Team – Comprised of staff and community members.

DOK – Depth of Knowledge

EdLeader21- a national network of school and district leaders focused on integrating the 4Cs (critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity) into education.

Formative Assessment – an assessment of student progress that is done as part of a regular lesson so that it does not interrupt instruction and can guide teacher action in the moment to improve student performance.

HOT – Higher Order Thinking – the kind of intellectual demands/skills required in the top half of Blooms Taxonomy – analysis, synthesis, and creativity.

IEP – Individualized Education Plan – A written and legal document that describes the services that are designated for students with disabilities. An IEP is required by Federal Law for identified students with disabilities.

Indicators of Success: The data or measures that will be used as evidence that the plan has been successfully implemented.

LEP – Limited English Proficiency – The study of the English language by students with a different native language.

Mission – a statement of who we are, what we do and why.

Multiple Measures – When gauging a student's performance in an important area, more than indicator or measure are used to ensure that the report is fair and representative of what the student is actually doing.

P21 – The 21st Century Skills partnership – a non-profit organization dedicated to helping prepare students for life, learning and work in the 21st Century.

Rubicon Atlas – an online curriculum mapping and management tool.

Rubrics – descriptors that show students and parents how well a skill must be performed to meet the district's expectations

Summative Assessment – a measurement of learning that is designed to gauge where a group of students are in comparison to other students. These assessments are completed apart from instruction and serve as accountability measures for both students and teachers.

Vision – a description of what it would be like if the district mastered its Mission