



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2021-2026**



**VISION
2026**

Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow, Leopards Forever

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Greeting GISD Leopard Nation,

I am excited to share with you Gainesville ISD's new strategic plan, **VISION 2026**. The planning process, which began in the spring of 2020, provided an opportunity to engage our faculty, students, staff and business community in conversations centered around creating an educational environment that prepares our students to be successful in an ever-changing world. It builds on our strengths, addresses our gaps, and focuses on our role in this extraordinarily challenging and unique time in our society. This strategic plan will serve as our road map, centered around our mission, vision and values, that will guide our work for the next 5 years. This process has been an all-inclusive one that aims to build upon the work of previous initiatives and the desires of the Gainesville faculty, staff, students and community. Our primary focus will remain the same: to provide opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for immediate and future success for all students, PK-12, through a cooperative effort of school, home and community.



To build upon and reinforce our past achievements as well as our future areas of focus we have identified four essential areas of effort for our strategic plan: to ensure that our instructional methodologies are aligned with the needs of our students therefore increasing **academic** performance; to **recruit and retain** effective student centered instructional leaders; to provide more opportunities for our parents, guardians and community to **connect** with our schools; and to ensure that ALL of our students receive an **equitable** educational experience. We strongly believe that these identified areas of focus will pay huge dividends for us in GISD, both inside and outside of the classroom.

GISD is positioned to achieve a higher level of academic excellence as a system that brings together innovative education and unlimited student opportunity. Throughout the next five years of the **VISION 2026**, we will continue to push onward and upward. We will promote innovation, collaboration and discovery across each pathway of study. And we will continue our targeted investments in programs that provide every student with the skills needed to be successful in whatever their career endeavors may be. This is our commitment. **EVERY LEOPARD, EVERY DAY!**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DesMontes Stewart'.

DesMontes Stewart, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

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VISION 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN



Gainesville ISD
2021-2026



OUR VISION:
Reaching every student every day to be learners and leaders.

MISSION

We ensure students and staff develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for immediate and future success, through a cooperative effort of school, home and community.

OUR CORE BELIEFS

EQUITY

EXCELLENCE

DIVERSITY

INNOVATION

PARTNERSHIP

SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

DEMOGRAPHICS



Gainesville High School
Grades 9-12 | Built in 2006



Gainesville Junior High School
Grades 7-8 | Built in 1958



Gainesville Intermediate
Grades 5-6 | Built in 1997



Chalmers Elementary
Grades 2-4 | Built in 2000



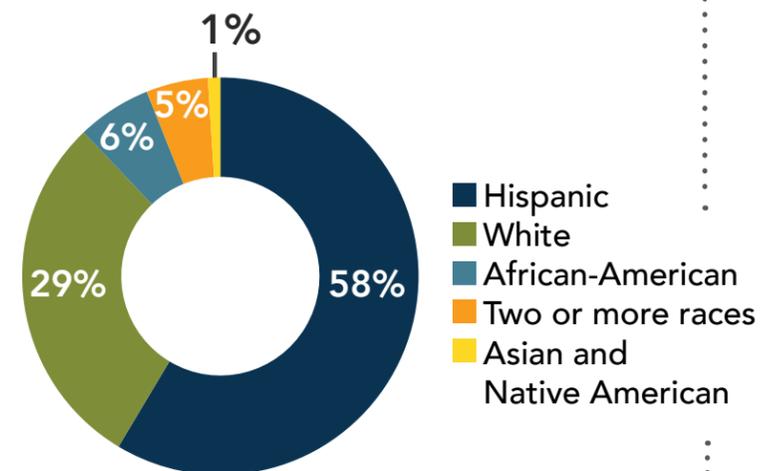
Edison Elementary
Grades PreK-1 | Built in 1961



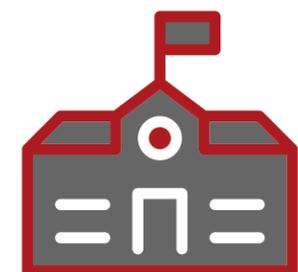
Head Start
Early Childhood | Built in 2000

 **3,000+**
STUDENTS

 **82%**
free and reduced
lunch rate



6 campuses
503,454 square feet





STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To develop our 5-year strategic plan, we reached out to our stakeholders to get their input about GISD’s future. We conducted several strategic planning workgroup sessions involving board members and district-level participation. We also conducted several focus groups with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and members of the business community. These focus groups solicited the reaction of the stakeholders to our district’s core values and priorities. Particularly, we wanted to ensure that the information was clear and concise for multiple audiences. In addition, we wanted to get their feedback on what additional areas they wanted to see reflected in the plan.

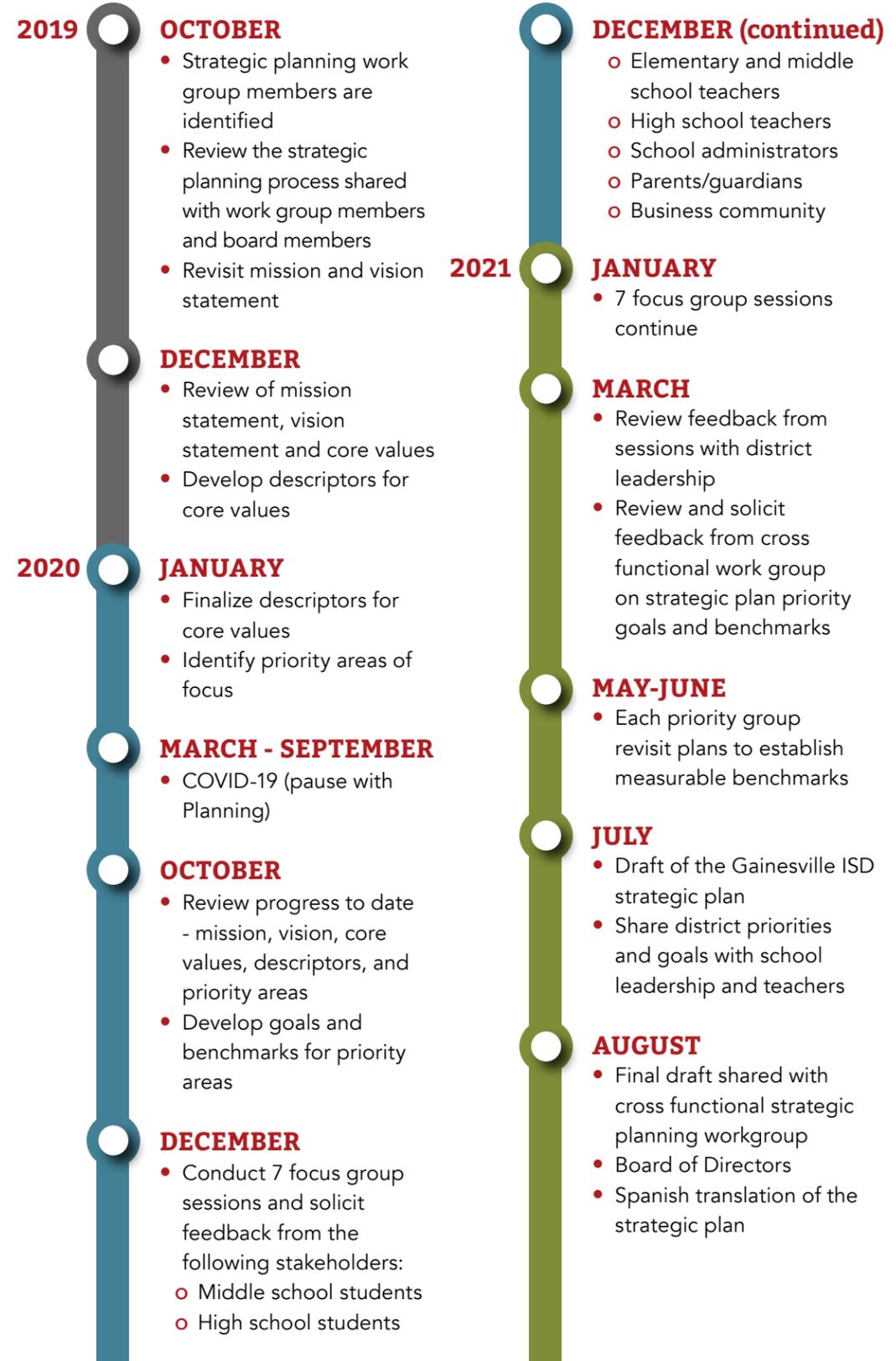
Our strategic planning efforts began in October 2019 with a cross-functional strategic planning work group. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and the unprecedented challenges and adaptations we had to make, we paused the planning efforts and focused on ending the 2019-2020 school year positively and geared up for a successful school opening in August 2020.

In October 2020, we restarted the planning effort and recalibrated our process based on where we left off. This was followed by a series of seven focus group meetings held in December 2020 and January 2021. Based on their feedback, information was shared with the district team members who then worked in the priority groups to further define the benchmarks for the goals identified. The teams worked on the completion of these goals from April 2021 - June 2021.

While the strategic planning process took longer than originally anticipated, we wanted to be sure we hit the mark. Our intentional approach took into account the current stresses facing our district as well as staff and students adapting to virtual learning. Based on the lessons learned from the onset of the pandemic, we devised a coherent strategy on how to move GISD forward and incorporated the perspectives of our stakeholders. This time allowed us to come together as a district and community to focus on how we equip and support our students to have the confidence and critical thinking skills to pursue their dreams and passions.

Presented on the next page is an overview of our 2019-2021 strategic planning process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE



OUR COMMUNITY

Gainesville is called home to nearly 17,000 residents and is the county seat for Cooke County in north central Texas.

The community of Gainesville is overwhelmingly welcoming, and people will greet you with a firm handshake, a warm hello, and a smile. Gainesville inspires people to become hometown heroes every day. The citizens of this great community are generous with their dollars and most importantly their time and volunteer efforts. This is what makes Gainesville stand above the rest. Gainesville ISD is an integral part of the community, and the community is an integral part of Gainesville ISD.

The motto for the city of Gainesville is **“Totally Texas, All American”**, and for good reason. In 2001, Gainesville, Texas became the only city in America to host our nation’s highest decorated heroes annually to promote patriotism and celebrate the heroism of the recipients. As a result, in 2012, Gainesville was named the **“most patriotic town in America.”** The Medal of Honor Host City Program is ingrained in the fabric of the community through and through. Gainesville ISD is proud to be a part of the Medal of Honor annual celebration, and promotes patriotism within our schools.

Gainesville ISD students have the bonus of having the North Central Texas College (NCTC) main campus located in Gainesville just minutes from Gainesville High School. Due to this tremendous partnership, GHS boasts an overwhelming number of dual credit opportunities for students beginning in 9th grade. NCTC offers both academic and technical courses for high school students and those who want to obtain a top-of-the-line education at an affordable price.

The beliefs and values of the community of Gainesville are reflected in the students and staff at Gainesville ISD.

EQUITY

We believe access to a world class education in Gainesville is a right for all not a privilege for a few. We will never allow race, economic status or our own systems to be barriers to the education all students deserve.

EXCELLENCE

We believe in challenging ourselves and the bar we have created for academic, social, and emotional success in Gainesville. We will always raise the bar by believing that excellence is in our reach but not quite in our hands.

DIVERSITY

We believe that a diverse student and staff population enriches the learning environment. We value the unique identity of every adult and student in GISD and will actively seek diversity in all that we do.

INNOVATION

We believe we are preparing students for a future we cannot predict. We must empower students with the tools, leadership, and facilities to drive innovation in thought and action.

PARTNERSHIP

We believe strong partnerships are critical to achieving our vision. Partnerships provide innovative ideas and expertise that benefit our staff, students, families, and community.

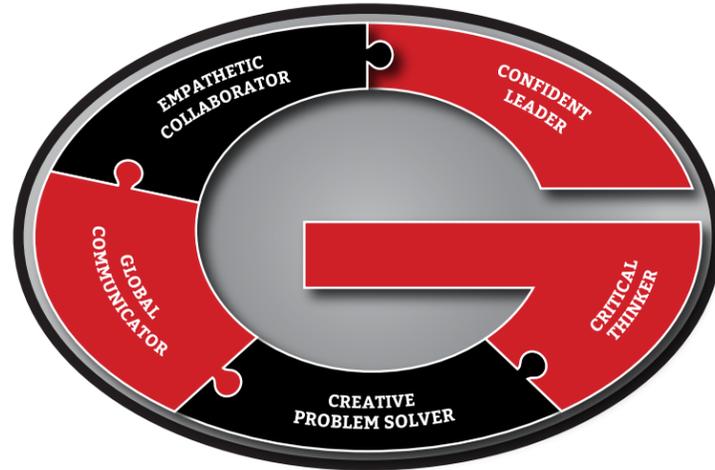
SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

We are committed to creating a learning environment that is safe, secure and comfortable, both physically and emotionally for all students.

CORE BELIEFS



PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



Gainesville Independent School District is committed to providing all students with the knowledge, experiences and opportunities necessary for them to develop the competencies required for success in school, in the workforce, and in life.

CONFIDENT LEADER

GISD graduates will develop a strong work ethic and leave our district grounded in a purpose enabling them to lead, embrace challenges and persevere to achieve their goals.

EMPATHETIC COLLABORATOR

GISD graduates will leave the district with a foundation for effective collaboration grounded in empathy and a desire to understand differing viewpoints and learn from others' experiences and cultures.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATOR

GISD graduates will be prepared to navigate a complex, ever-changing global society and economy via effective communication grounded in global thinking, digital literacy, and the understanding that communication includes verbal and non-verbal modes that are unique across cultures.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVER

GISD graduates will develop creative minds that solve real-world problems that we are unable to predict in an ever-changing society.

CRITICAL THINKER

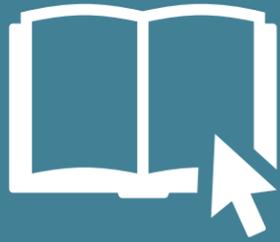
GISD graduates will develop critical thinking and curiosity about the world to foster life-long learning for themselves and service to others.



OUR PRIORITIES
Academics
Recruitment and Retention
Connectedness
Equity



PRIORITY 1



ACADEMICS

Academics are about every student meeting individual growth goals and accountability. Our passion for the success of our students motivates us to do what is needed to accomplish our goals by providing support for all.



GOALS

We are committed to academics.

All students will achieve academic growth in reading and math.

By 2026, all students will be proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

By 2026, all students will be proficient in math by the end of eighth grade.

By 2026, all Head Start and Pre-K students will be proficient in early learning outcomes and prekindergarten guidelines.

STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Student Centered Instruction

- Student data folders
- Student goal-setting
- Social-emotional learning
- Targeted instruction
- Small group instruction
- Student portfolios

Data Informed Decisions

- Tracking individual student growth
- Campus and teacher data talks
- Common assessment tools
- Training on data systems

Professional Learning /Educator Growth

- Strengthening Professional Learning Communities
- Districtwide Literacy Plan
- Campus Instructional Leadership Teams
- Individualized instructional coaching
- Standards based instruction
- Vertical alignment opportunities
- Video for self-reflection and feedback
- Classroom learning walks



I like lifelong learning and service to others both are really important and it teaches the students to give back.

–Parent Focus group Participant

PRIORITY 2



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Our staff are our most valuable asset. We work hard to retain talented staff while recruiting year-round for new talent. Everything we do is an opportunity to recruit or retain new GISD family members.



GOALS

We are committed to recruitment and retention.

Recruit and retain an effective and diverse workforce aligned to GISD's values. All students will be proficient in Reading by the end of third grade by 2026.

Develop talent through quality professional learning and leadership opportunities to impact retention.

Implement a "Grow Your Own Program" that builds passion for education in our students and supports their return to GISD as an educator.

STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Educator Support

- Individualized coaching for teachers and leaders
- Mentor Program
- New Teacher Academy
- Campus Instructional Leadership Teams
- Staff surveys
- District Professional Development Plan
- Curriculum Academy
- Ongoing teacher/staff recognition
 - High Five awards
 - Teacher of the Month
 - Teacher of the Year
 - End of the year awards

Year-Long Recruitment Plan

- Internal job fairs
- Social media recruitment campaign
- District recruitment videos
- Candidate profiles
- Collegiate & community partnerships

Pathways to Leadership

- Aspiring Leaders Academy
- Opportunities for leadership
 - Mentor Teacher
 - Lead Teacher
 - Department Chair
 - Instructional Coach
 - Assistant Principal
 - Principal
- Grow Your Own
 - Aspiring Educators Club
 - Collegiate partnerships
 - Paraprofessional opportunities for advancement



Let's have professional development in schools aligned to these goals.

–Teacher Focus Group Participant

PRIORITY 3



CONNECTEDNESS

Connectedness in GISD means that students are engaged, parents are participating in school and at home, and there is frequent collaboration between the district and our community partners. It is through parental engagement and community involvement that the student is academically, socially and emotionally connected.



GOALS

We are committed to connectedness.

Provide support for parent and family engagement and connection to the district.

Improve involvement of families in individual student progress.

Increase engagement of community partners at each campus.

STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Parent and Family Engagement

- Volunteer opportunities
- Campus Parental Involvement Plan
- Campus/district communication in Spanish
- District/campus newsletter
- District/campus website
- Social media

Community Involvement

- Community partners for each campus
- Principal participation in local organizations
- District magazine
- Billboards
- Mentorship programs
- Career fair

Connectedness to Student Learning

- Training and use of student and parent portal
- Teacher to parent communication (Class Dojo and Remind)
- Campus curriculum information nights
- Parent/teacher conferences



I want people to graduate from Gainesville and want to come back and live and put their kids in Gainesville rather than surrounding schools and districts.

–Business Stakeholder
Focus Group Participant

PRIORITY 4



EQUITY

We acknowledge that access to opportunities and success is not – and has not been – the same for all community members and that achieving equity begins by building this awareness in others. We also strive to uncover the causes of those imbalances, remove barriers, and advance equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.



GOALS

We are committed to equity.

Improve educational opportunities for all students.

Ensure equity of instruction to meet all students' needs.

Improve technology integration for individualized learning opportunities.

STRATEGIES AND HIGHLIGHTED ACTIONS

Closing Learning Gaps

- Professional learning
- Leadership teams
- Professional Learning Communities
- Technology for individualized learning
- Instructional Leadership Teams

Learning Environment

- Building relationships (*Capturing Kids Hearts*)
- Social-emotional learning
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Culturally responsive teaching

Data Collection & Research

- Student/staff/parent surveys
- Monitoring student growth
- Monitor districtwide programs



I want everyone of those young people to feel valued. They are loved and valued by their community.

–Business Stakeholder
Focus Group Participant



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Achievement Gap: The “achievement gap” in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures.

Common assessment tools: A standardized method of evaluating student learning, progress and knowledge retention, ultimately acting as a tool that provides prompt feedback on the effectiveness of specific teaching content, formats and styles.

Core Values: The fundamental beliefs of GISD. These guiding principles dictate behavior and can help people make decisions for the district.

Data Systems: Collect, store and manage vast amounts of data about students, teachers and schools — data that can be used to improve educational outcomes.

Educational Equity: Educational disparities based on race, economics and other dimensions of difference are reduced and eliminated. Positive school outcomes are distributed equitably and proportionally across all demographic and identity groups. Negative outcomes and disproportionality are reduced for all groups.

Educational Excellence: We keep the bar high in all we do. We educate students for life and for reflective citizenship. We empower students and employees in the preservation of their identity and culture. Substance, depth, and critical thinking are more important than compliance or test scores.

Equity: When race, economics and learning disabilities does not determine quality of life, opportunities, and outcomes.

Highlighted Actions: These priority projects within each strategy specify actions aimed at helping to achieve each measurable goal. These highlighted actions are aligned with those of school and department improvement plans, which also identify implementation processes and measures.

Instructional Leadership Team: The campus ILT consists of the campus principal and key campus leaders responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the targeted improvement plan, monitoring student performance, and determination of student interventions and support services.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): The overall student performance outcomes that GISD is trying to achieve and used to evaluate the ultimate success of the district.

Measures: Ways in which GISD will determine the extent to which goals are being implemented.

Mission: A brief description of GISD’s fundamental purpose both for those in the educational setting and for the community. It answers the question, “Why do we exist?”

Professional Learning Community: A group of educators who decide to come together regularly to learn with and from each other on needs they have identified. They talk about the value of collaboration and how this community has helped them stay connected and supported.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): An integral part of education, human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

Strategies: High-level actions for how the district plans to achieve each goal. Identified within each strategy are highlighted actions, which are specific priority projects that help achieve each measurable goal.

Student Portfolios: A student portfolio is a compilation of academic work and other forms of educational evidence assembled to show learning progress.

Vertical Alignment: The degree to which the components of an education system—such as standards, curricula, assessments, and instruction—work together to achieve desired goals.

Vision: A clear statement that describes what GISD is trying to achieve in the future.





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