

SHARED
ACCOUNTABILITY
AND RESPONSIBILITY
BLUEPRINT,
A SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Oklahoma City AFT 2309

Improving public education requires trusting relationships and mutual commitment from labor, management and the community. Our hopes and dreams should not be in isolation from each other but a continuing conversation that honors and respects each stakeholder. Trusting relationships are difficult to develop or maintain without a vision that brings us together. The vision of Oklahoma City AFT for Oklahoma City Schools is one where all parents feel proud sending their children to our schools because they are safe, orderly caring and high achieving. It is our hope that others share our vision and will work with us to bring lasting reform for our schools. Change in our schools will be difficult if the top leaders from the community, school district and AFT do not have the same vision that is based on a collaborative relationship. It is foolish to believe that any of us alone have all the answers and, even if we did, how can they be implemented without each other's help? A drastic and immediate departure from our old ways must be made. We are proposing a shared responsibility, shared accountability blueprint. Our blueprint outlines a general direction of change, but to be successful in overcoming the defenders of the status quo, a powerful and respected leadership group should be formed to help lead our transformation. Now is the time for high quality leadership to assist our Superintendent. Our district has many managers but few leaders. Successfully changing a large, inwardly focused bureaucratic organization will not happen unless leaders can install a sense of urgency among all stakeholders and employees in particular.

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY BLUEPRINT, A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Quality Teaching and Development

- Design and implement a comprehensive teacher evaluation system
 - Develop a new evaluation with multiple measures, thereby creating a system that is a process, not an event, and would inform employment decisions and due process proceedings
- Establish a meaningful Professional Development system that contributes to a teacher's professional growth
 - Expand our Peer Assistance and Review program, with Oklahoma City AFT being the main provider of professional growth opportunities, including classroom management and coaching for teachers
- Review seniority to ensure our best teachers remain in our district
 - Use multiple measures such as evaluations, teacher absenteeism, student growth and other measures to make accurate employment decisions

Student Achievement and Behavior

- Increase student achievement by creating a new school design
 - Oklahoma City has implemented a continuous learning calendar; let's continue this work by redesigning the school day and providing the time and tools for our students and teachers to be successful
- Make reading a true priority

- Reading on grade level can't happen without intensive assistance which could be more time for tutoring, a longer school year for targeted schools or mandatory Reading Summer School for students who are not proficient
- o Establish and Enforce a Systemwide Behavior Management Program to ensure safe and orderly schools.
 - Alternative settings are a must: we can no longer ignore a system that allows five percent of our students to hold the education of 95% of our students hostage, nor can any teacher or principal shirk their responsibility to maintain order in the classroom

School Improvement and Reform

- o Overcoming ineffective leadership is a daunting task, so let's ensure a quality principal for every school
 - Use multiple measures, including input from students, parents and teachers, to remove poor performers
- o No one gets a pass on school reform; success depends on shared responsibility and shared sacrifice
 - Teacher accountability is a must, however all stakeholders must be held accountable. Develop behavior and/or performance contracts for students, parents, teachers, administrators, school boards and state leaders that clearly define each one's part in improving our schools.
- o Improving school-wide achievement is a district-wide goal, however special attention should be given to "hard to staff" schools
 - Recruiting and retaining master level teachers would be enhanced by increased salary, an effective principal, teacher participation in decision making and a safe and orderly environment
- o Career Ladders that recognize success in student achievement
 - Move to a compensation system that recognizes specific teacher accomplishments, which could include pay for performance
- o Legislation should be enacted to incentivize the district to implement this blueprint, in its entirety, by using the school funding formula to increase assistance.

Contractual Elements

- o Review the Collective Bargaining Agreement to meet today's educational needs
 - Address onerous or obsolete language
- o Develop and implement standards to restructure schools in need of improvement
 - Insert school restructuring language into the Collective Bargaining Agreement. We should not waste years to restructure a school in need of improvement
- o Negotiate a slimmed down contract when opening new schools
 - Pilot a streamlined Collective Bargaining Agreement to determine the areas for flexibility and site-based team decision making to improve student achievement

Collaboration

- Develop a due process system that ensures fairness and is, in reality, a review of the evaluation process, with the adjudication of a teacher's performance taking no longer than one hundred days
 - Create a system for determining an independent hearing officer for school board termination hearings.
- Find out what people really believe
 - Use a professional polling firm to conduct focus groups and survey our employees, students, parents and district residents to secure reliable data from employees and our customers in order to make informed decisions
- A small committee of our most respected leaders should be formed to nurture an environment for change within our schools and community. We must secure the assistance of research-based providers, private foundations, the community, and the American Federation of Teachers so that rigorous and innovative reform can be made. None of us should fear putting the public back into public education. Shared responsibility and shared accountability is the blueprint for improving our schools.

In January, 2010, Randi Weingarten, President of The American Federation of Teachers, proposed *A New Path Forward: Four Approaches to Quality Teaching and Better Schools*. The Oklahoma City AFT for some time has been working with our national union, school district, community and legislature to reform our schools and expand on Randi's initiatives.

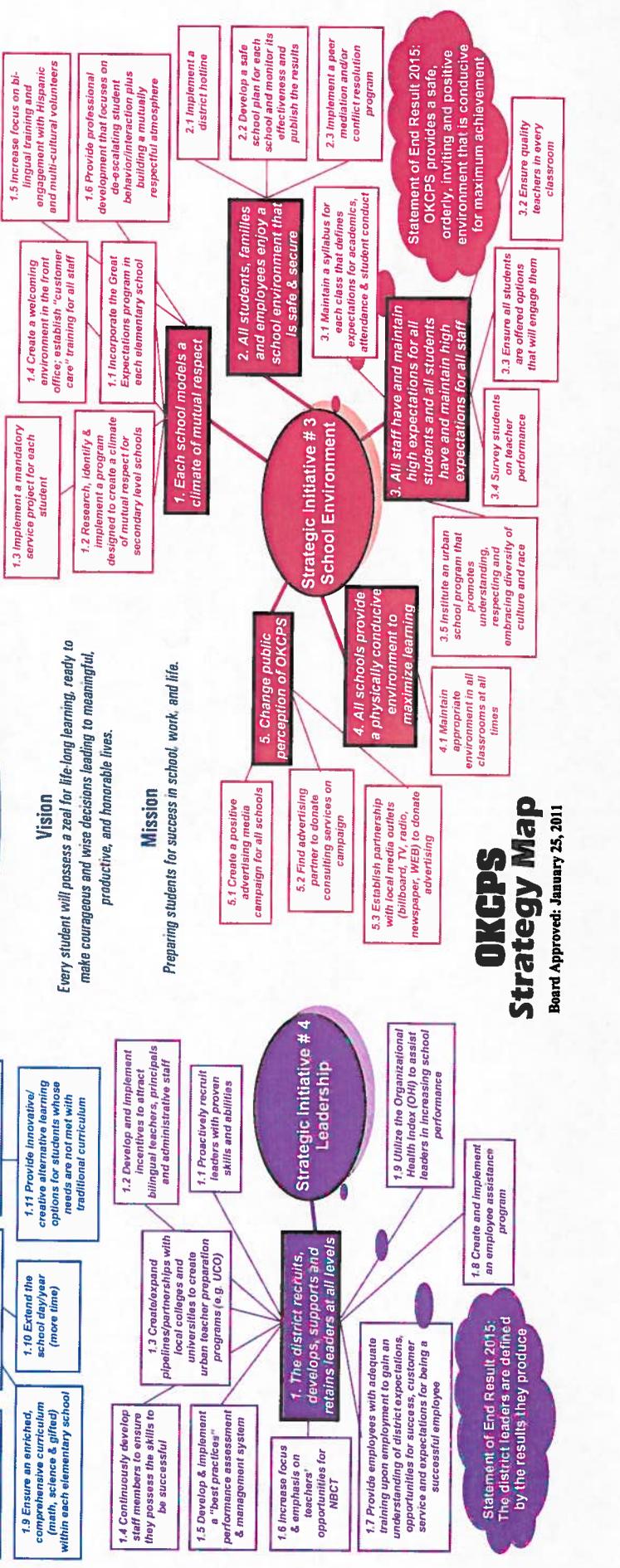
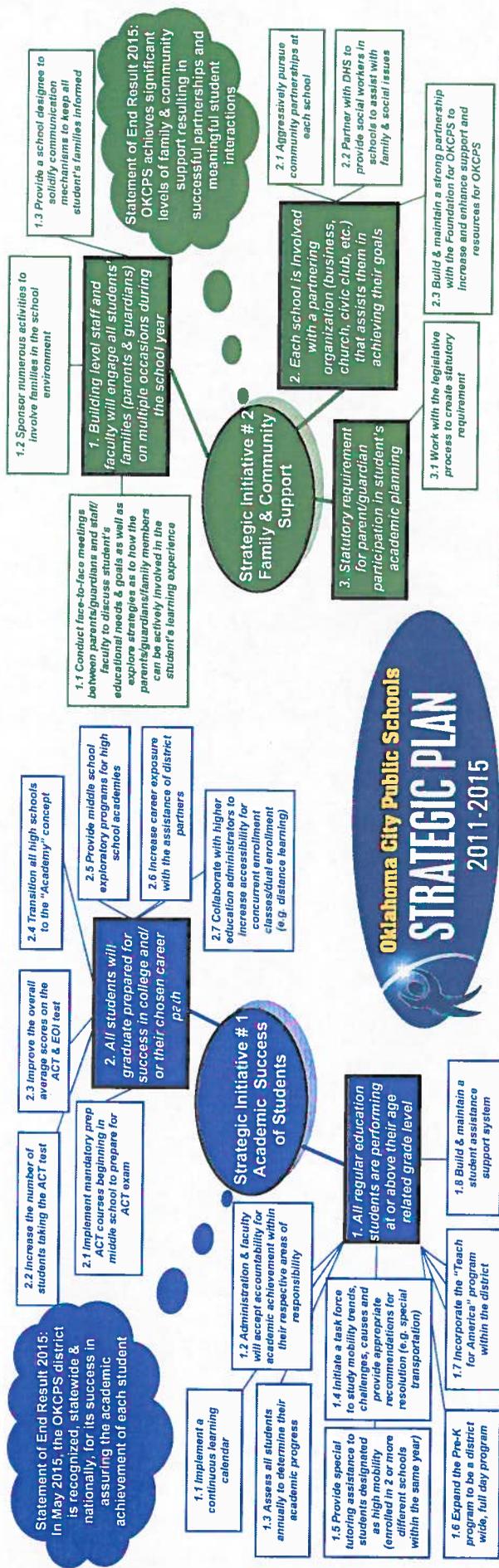
The Oklahoma City AFT has made it quite clear that we want to be actively involved in improving Oklahoma City schools and that we will not be a roadblock for needed change, nor a defender of failed policies, practices or agreements.

To this end we have developed this five point plan of shared responsibility and shared accountability that we believe should be addressed if we expect our schools to improve.

Our plan is at the minimum a starting point for discussion, however if implemented we believe our plan would result in dramatic gains in student achievement. To be clear we are not proposing a smorgasbord of random ideas or acts where the district picks and chooses items from the reform buffet. Our blueprint contains interrelated and interdependent components that clearly focus on the interests of students.

The Oklahoma City AFT knows that more funding by itself is not the answer and many of our proposals do not call for additional revenue. However the real world of Oklahoma City schools has been in the making for decades and new approaches, mandates, or laws without intensive assistance in some areas will not achieve the desired results.

We should not underestimate the difficulty of the task before us, nor should we be making decisions without a complete explanation, examination and understanding of our issues. Our blueprint has the flexibility to meet the needs of each stakeholder, and we are eager to discuss, fine tune and lead our district to excellence. All of us have an ownership stake in our public schools as well as an obligation to provide a world class education for our children. With ownership comes responsibility and our obligation must be sustained with accountability. Absolutely no one can take a pass on shared responsibility and shared accountability.



**OKCPS
Strategy Map**
Board Approved: January 25, 2011