






# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024

*Created Spring of 2024*

*Revised Spring of 2026*

#### 2026 UPDATES KEY

-  Completed
-  Completed & Ongoing
-  Redirected/Not Started

Prepared by:

**Sarah Sjolie, MPA**  
**Meristem Consulting**

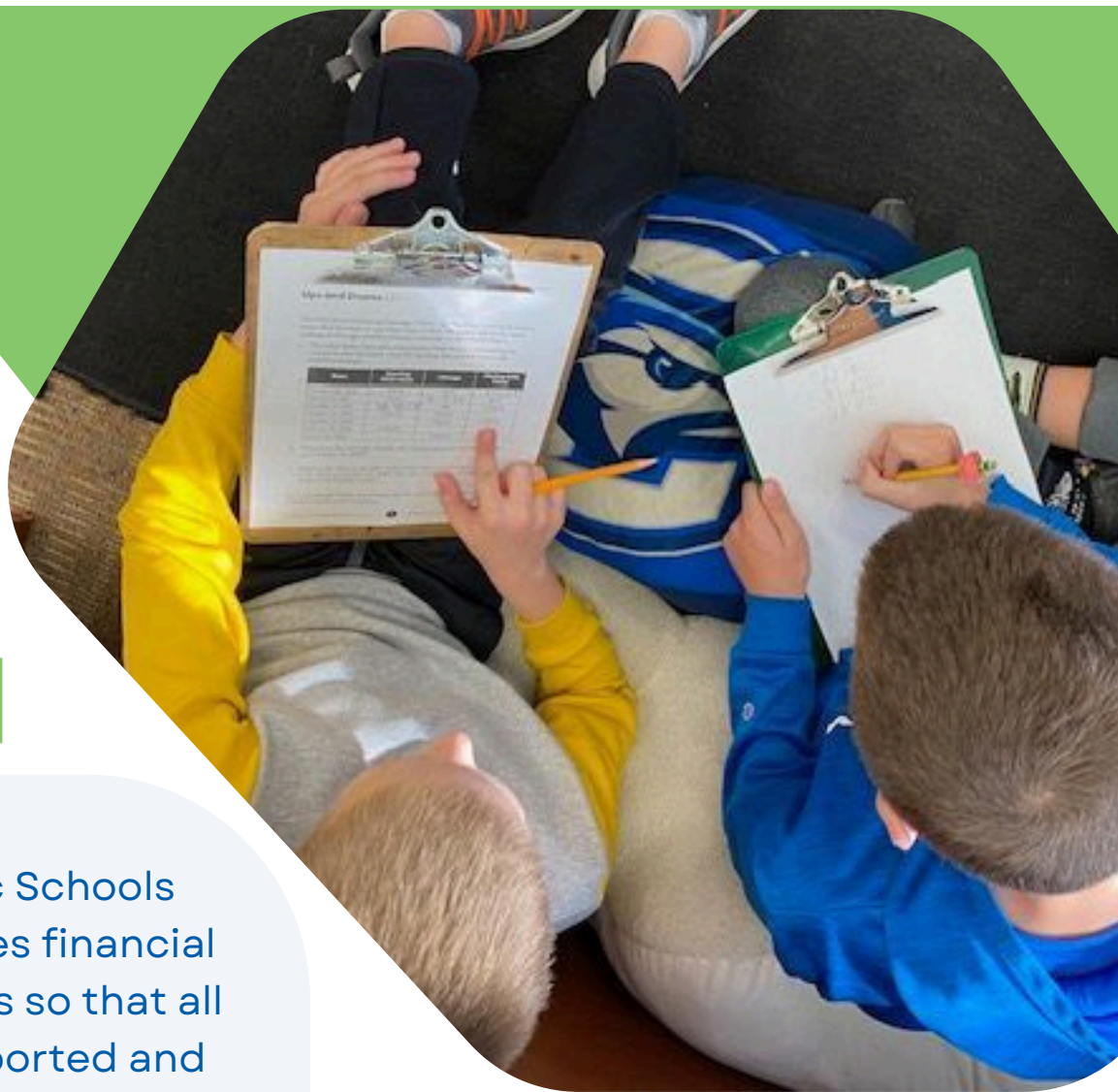


# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to promote excellence in education for all students by providing resources to inspire learning, enrich teaching and maximize opportunities.

# OUR VISION

Bennington Public Schools Foundation bridges financial and resource gaps so that all students are supported and connected to educational opportunities.



# OUR BOARD



**Blake Thompson**  
Executive Director



**Chris Reiner**  
President



**Jason Limbach**  
Vice President



**Michelle Miller**  
Treasurer



**Kim Rohe**  
Secretary



**Dr. Aaron Plas**  
Superintendent



**Joe Pick**  
School Board Liaison



**Tara Gufford**  
Member At Large



**David Holtorf**  
Member at Large



**Jason Holling Karas**  
Member at Large



**Christen Shelbourn**  
Member at Large



**Kristi Thornton**  
Member At Large



**Connie Blazek Wickham**  
Member at Large

# PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

The Bennington community is growing rapidly and is building upon a culture of excellence across a community-centered school district. This planning process is vision-based and was created by the Bennington Public Schools Foundation Board throughout a series of accelerated planning sessions using the Technology of Participation model from the Institute of Culture Affairs.

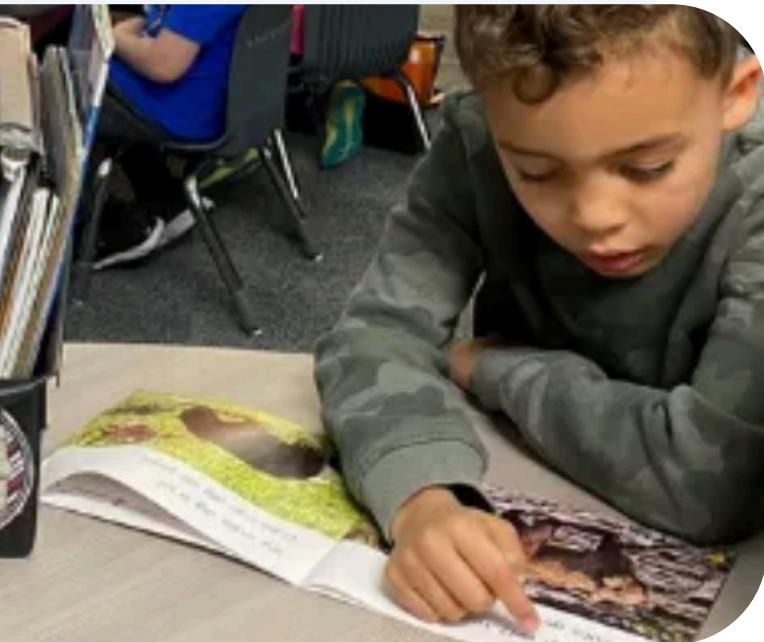
This plan aligns the Board's vision with the short and long term goals that were articulated during the planning process. The Foundation operates on a fiscal year basis from September 1 - August 31.

# STRATEGIC ACTIONS

These 4 strategic actions are the focused areas of work that guide the Bennington Public Schools Foundation.

01. Optimize Operations
02. Amplify Student Impact
03. Build the Brand
04. Diversify and Increase Fundraising

# OUR KEY AUDIENCE STUDENTS



Serving **4,346** students annually, Bennington Public Schools Foundation serves in a public/private partnership with the Bennington Public Schools District to ensure that all kids receive wrap-around support and ongoing investment to ensure bright futures.

## 2026 UPDATES KEY



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Completed & Ongoing



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# 24/25 FY GOALS

These short-term goals guide the work in 24/25 FY and are aligned within each of the Strategic Actions that will carry forward in FY25 and beyond. These goals must be assessed annually and updated based on the long-term strategic plan. The staff and Board will monitor progress by using the Operational Dashboard found in the appendix.

1.0

## Optimize Operations

- ✓ 1.1 Create a staff development plan to strengthen current and future staff and position for organizational growth.
- ✓ 1.2 Maximize Board operations and communications.
- ✓ 1.3 Recruit more teachers and staff to serve on committees to shape the future programming and outreach of the organization.

2.0

## Amplify Support of Student Impact

- ✓ 2.1 Conduct a district and school-based assessment to identify areas of student needs.
- ✓ 2.2 Partner with All Star Kids staff to identify areas of enhancement for the program.
- ✓ 2.3 Reevaluate and restructure an updated plan for student scholarships.

3.0

## Build the Brand/Spread the Love

- ✓ 3.1 Elevate FY25 gala to raise an additional \$60,000 in net proceeds.
- ✓ 3.2 Increase brand awareness by showcasing the mission in action.
- ✓ 3.3 Parent Teacher Organization and school collaboration improved and reinvented.

4.0

## Diversify and Increase Funding to Grow Financial Impact

- ✓ 4.1 Create a fund development plan to diversify funding streams.
- ✗ 4.2 By end of FY24, engage 30% of Bennington alumni in giving to the Foundation.
- ✓ 4.3 Begin planning to launch an RFP for a capital campaign in future years.



Completed



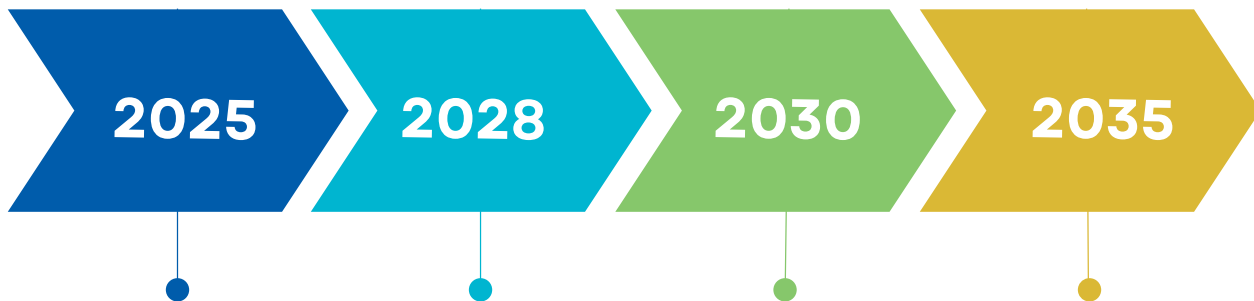
Completed & Ongoing



Redirected/Not Started

# 2025 - 2035

## LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLANNING



### 1.0

## Optimize Operations

### 2025 - 2028

- ✓ • Finalize office space planning for Foundation headquarters and future program growth
- ✓ • Establish checks and balances for all positions held at the Foundation
- ✓ • Continued investment in annual staff and board training
- ✓ • Create a technology plan with maintenance, planned depreciation for new software and hardware
- ✋ • Invest in an annual policy review process
- ✋ • Finalize fund development plan and evaluate need for additional staff
- ✓ • Audit additional technology needed to support Foundation roles
- ✓ • Own separate tech domain and email system

### 2029 - 2030

- ✓ • Look at adding a 6th All Star Kids site or preschool model to meet student needs
  - Board Decision to not move forward with preschool model
- Investigate the need for Program Director for All Star Kids in a larger update for leadership structure for All Star Kids program roles
- Expand Board or creating sub-committee of the Board, based on decision on preschool
- Complete a staffing plan based on growth of events and programs



# 2025 - 2035 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTINUED

## 1.0

## Optimize Operations

### 2031-2035

- ✓ Review and update strategic plan and engage additional stakeholders outside of the Board to augment the process
- ✓ Assess staff growth needs
  - Roles for consideration include:
    - Associate Director
    - Events Coordinator
    - Office Manager and Accountant
- ✓ Optimize Foundation operations for growth:
  - 6th All Star Kids site
  - Second high school
  - ~~Launch preschool~~
  - Own building
  - Add needed additional staff to provide for ~~preschool~~ and all programming

## 2.0

## Amplify Support of Student Impact

### 2025 - 2028

- ✓ Analyze Key Programs; Teacher development, AP Reimbursement, Scholarship, Life Track.
- ✓ Consider adding more student support:
  - Health assessment programs to be offered to students
  - English as a second language support
  - Field Trips
  - High Ability Learner (HAL) Support
- ✓ Add more career support:
  - Career day/job fair
  - Job shadowing



2026 UPDATES KEY



Completed



Completed & Ongoing



Redirected/Not Started

# 2025 - 2035 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTINUED



## Amplify Support of Student Impact

### 2025 - 2028 (Continued)

- ✓ Create lunch debt payoff program; support families application for free and reduced lunch program
- ✗ Recruit volunteers to support health needs of kids in school buildings
- ✓ Increase funding for classroom grants
- ✓ ✗ Expand All Star Kids; hire an All Star Kids Program Director
- ✓ Expand awareness & partnership for assistance for students
- ✓ Formalize a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and Foundation partnership to maximize dollars for student support
- ✗ Explore ways to augment mental health support for youth
- ✗ Understand current mental health needs and services offered

### 2029 - 2030

- ✗ Launch preschool model



## Build the Brand/Spread the Love

### 2025 - 2028

- ✓ Work more with PTO's and school-based, booster clubs
- ✓ Add signage for the Foundation and All Star Kids
- ✗ Launch traveling library during summer to step up brand marketing in neighborhoods
- ✓ Write testimonials from teachers, students, and parents
- ✓ Update program logos to create cohesive coordination with the Foundation
- ✓ Host neighborhood nights (eg; Kona Ice)
  - Develop story location list and diversify audiences to reach more people
- ✓ Make mission events like the scholarship luncheon mission-based and profitable



# 2025 - 2035 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTINUED

3.0

## Build the Brand/Spread the Love

### 2025 - 2028 (Continued)

- ✓• Build cohesion with other businesses through strategic partnership
- ✓• Share our story and where we make an impact via a communications plan
- ✗• All Star Kids to reach parents via testimonials and supplemental field trips
- ✗• Participate in a real estate promotion event
- ✓• 75% of community know our story by 2027
- ✓• Promote and coordinate Foundation and Teammates' efforts

### 2029-2035

- ✓• Create prominent signage for the Foundation and All Star Kids in community
- ✓• Increase PTO support
  - ✗• Websites tied to the Foundation's sites
  - ✗• PTO onboarding kit with Foundation promotion and messaging
  - Look at additional staff for marketing
- ✓• Promote Foundation Director as the external face of the organization
- ✗• Launch Foundations preschool

4.0

## Diversify and Increase Funding to Grow Financial Impact

### 2025 - 2028

- ✓• Alumni ask that leads to a majority of annual gifts
- ✗• Promote Foundation as a designated gift category for teacher giving
- ✗• Write a comprehensive fund development plan
- ✓• Capitalize on "in-kind" gifts
- ✓• Create an endowment including planned-giving and estate-planning
- ✓• Increase grant funding via corporate and foundation funders



Completed



Completed & Ongoing



Redirected/Not Started

# 2025 - 2035 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTINUED



## Diversify and Increase Funding to Grow Financial Impact

### 2025 - 2028 (Continued)

- Engage one, big donor per year with additional lead gifts
- Make district vendor ask for sponsorship or funding
- Cultivate an annual giving campaign

### 2029- 2035

- Launch a specific, need-based capital campaign by 2030
- Expand gala and/or host 2nd Gala - double in size
  - Expand All Star Kids
- Maintain and grow friendraising activities to cultivate new donors
- Partner with a corporation as a key sponsor
- Launch preschool
- Capital campaign raises \$3M



# SUMMARY

The Bennington Public Schools Foundation is an esteemed pillar of the Bennington community and its superpower comes from working in tandem with the Bennington School District in a public/private partnership.

The Foundation has the opportunity to create greater impact and visibility. This Strategic Plan outlines the critical short and long term strategies that the Bennington Public School Foundation must implement to ensure all Bennington kids have the opportunity to thrive.

