



NORTH SPRINGS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN SY 2015/16 – SY 2017/18

APPROVED AUGUST 2015

In May 2012, the Georgia Board of Education voted to make Fulton County Schools the state's largest charter system. The charter system model offers freedom and flexibility, both at the school level, and system wide, to employ research-based methods to improve student achievement, even if such innovations would require exemptions to current state laws and regulations.

Given this framework, individual schools within Fulton County have the ability to work in dramatically new ways. We are asking our communities to help drive change and to get involved in our schools. Our collective vision is that every Fulton County school will have a principal and local School Governance Council equipped to lead effectively in a charter system environment to improve student achievement through innovation and flexibility. Schools will be empowered to consider the best uses of resources at the local level and design innovative practices that align with school needs.

North Springs Charter High School began the strategic planning process in the spring of 2015, with what we believe is a unique advantage. Unlike other schools in Cohort 3, NSCHS has had the benefit of writing its own charter in 2007, and in 2012, under the leadership of a Governance Board. During the transition from school charter to system charter, the NS' Governance Board worked closely with the Principal and newly elected Governance Council to ensure the continuity of the initial charter goals. Throughout the strategic planning process, the ability of both the Board and the Council to work together for the good of North Springs Charter High School has been a strength.

Our process included five distinct phases: (1) a needs assessment; (2) the identification of priority issues; (3) the establishment of long-term outcomes, focus areas, & short-term goals; (4) the formulation of strategic initiatives; and (5) the development of a monitoring plan. Developed over a period of several months and designed collaboratively with input and guidance from many stakeholders, the strategic plan represents our deliberate approach to shape and guide what **North Springs Charter High School** is, what we do, and why. Our students deserve the best educational experience we can provide, and this plan sets our vision and direction for making that happen.



SECTION II. Context for the Strategic Plan: The School's Needs Assessment

For every school, the strategic planning process must begin with a thorough consideration of the questions “Where are we as a school?” and with “What do we have to work?” By identifying strengths and weaknesses within the school and examining opportunities and challenges within the external environment, schools lay the foundation for building a strategic plan that builds on their positive attributes while overcoming any weaknesses or areas for improvement.

North Springs Charter High School began the strategic planning process by conducting a needs assessment. Through a close analysis of the internal and external environments, we sought to identify stakeholders' perceptions of our school and enhance our understanding of the political, socio-economic, and demographic environment in which the school operates. By analyzing a comprehensive set of school data, the leaders of **North Springs Charter High School** clarified performance trends and identified the school's most critical areas for improvement.

Needs Assessment – Process

In February 2015, four members of the newly elected Governance Council attended the first strategic planning session and began looking at the different components of a Needs Assessment Work Plan. The members started by looking at data points that were *internal* and that affected student learning such as AP/IB Course Participation, AP Exam Scores, Graduation Rates, and the School Quality Review (SQR). In the area of Climate and Culture, the members of the team looked at discipline data, teacher and parent AdvancED surveys, and student focus group data. The team then began looking at data points that were *external* and that affected community resources, trends, and perceptions. They decided to create a both a survey for community stakeholders and to hold community leader interviews.

The window, in which the community perception survey was open, yielded 85 responses with detailed notes. Upon closing the survey, the Governance Council organized and reviewed the data. In addition, the Principal held student focus groups, randomly selecting students from various grade levels, and asking questions using the protocol provided. The Principal collected, organized, and documented the data on the Needs Assessment Work Plan.

The final step was to pull the data for each of the internal and external environments and have the Leadership Team begin digging into it. The Principal assigned each member of the Leadership Team to various groups in order to analyze a data set from the Student Learning and Climate and Culture Components. Each group filled out the needs assessment finding worksheet for their specific area, citing the supporting data and data sources. Lastly, the Governance Council met in a work session and reviewed the items placed on the Needs Assessment Work Plan, item by item.



Needs Assessment – Summary of Findings

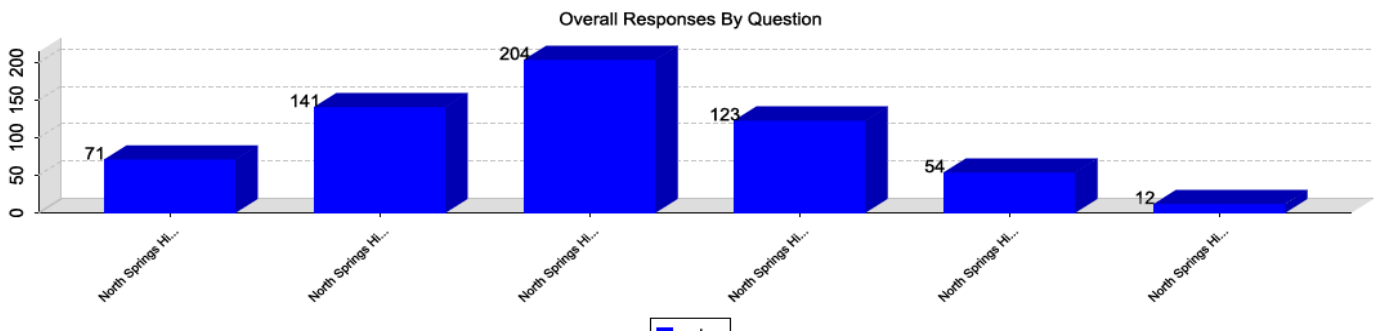
The next phase of the needs assessment phase moved to prioritizing the findings that the leadership team created and the governance council verified. The method used to prioritize the numerous findings was a mix between the S.U.G. Method and the Dotmocracy Method. The Governance Council dissected each priority and created a list of our top priority findings. Listed below are the prioritized findings:

Prioritized Finding #1 - In the 2014-2015 AdvanceED Surveys given to students and teachers the topic of respect was one of the highest rated items. Students do not feel they are treated with respect and similarly many teachers feel students do not treat them with respect or respect each other's property.

Student Survey - Students expressed with an average score of 3.03 that in "my school all students are treated with respect" – only 11.74% strongly agreed with this statement.

Question / Institution			Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total
			%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1. In my school, programs and services are available to help me succeed.	North Springs High School	Average Score	24.46%	45.79%	24.3%	3.14%	1.32%	0.99%	100%
		3.86	24.46%	45.79%	24.3%	3.14%	1.32%	0.99%	100%
		Total	24.46%	45.79%	24.3%	3.14%	1.32%	0.99%	100%
2. In my school, the purpose and expectations are clearly explained to me and my family.	North Springs High School	Average Score	19.83%	46.28%	24.63%	5.95%	2.15%	1.16%	100%
		3.72	19.83%	46.28%	24.63%	5.95%	2.15%	1.16%	100%
		Total	19.83%	46.28%	24.63%	5.95%	2.15%	1.16%	100%
3. In my school, a high quality education is offered.	North Springs High School	Average Score	24.13%	41.65%	26.12%	4.46%	2.48%	1.16%	100%
		3.77	24.13%	41.65%	26.12%	4.46%	2.48%	1.16%	100%
		Total	24.13%	41.65%	26.12%	4.46%	2.48%	1.16%	100%
4. In my school, all students are treated with respect.	North Springs High School	Average Score	11.74%	23.31%	33.72%	20.33%	8.93%	1.98%	100%
		3.03	11.74%	23.31%	33.72%	20.33%	8.93%	1.98%	100%
		Total	11.74%	23.31%	33.72%	20.33%	8.93%	1.98%	100%
5. In my school, teachers work together to improve student learning.	North Springs High School	Average Score	16.36%	35.21%	33.88%	9.59%	3.64%	1.32%	100%
		3.47	16.36%	35.21%	33.88%	9.59%	3.64%	1.32%	100%
		Total	16.36%	35.21%	33.88%	9.59%	3.64%	1.32%	100%
Total			19.31%	38.45%	28.53%	8.69%	3.7%	1.32%	100%

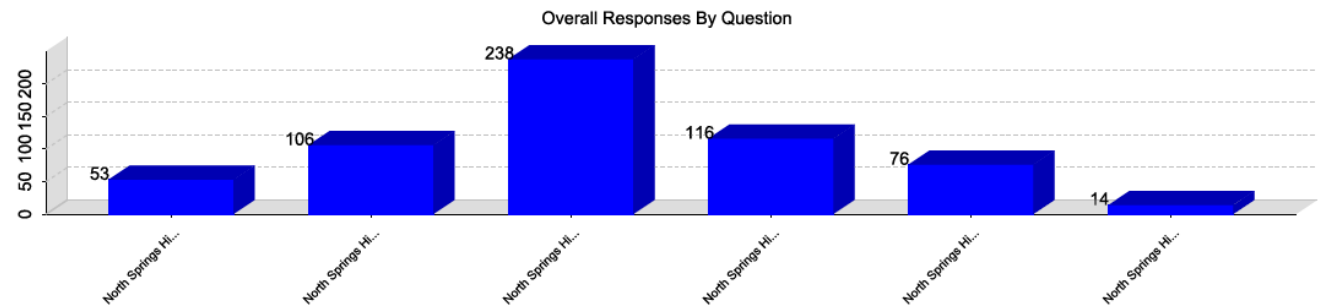
Question 4. In my school, all students are treated with respect.



Student Survey - Students expressed with an average score of 2.84 that “in my school students treat adults with respect” - only 8.79% of students strongly agreed with this statement.

7. In my school, students treat adults with respect.	North Springs High School	Average Score	8.79%	17.58%	39.47%	19.24%	12.6%	2.32%	100%
		2.84	8.79%	17.58%	39.47%	19.24%	12.6%	2.32%	100%
	Total			8.79%	17.58%	39.47%	19.24%	12.6%	2.32%

Question 7. In my school, students treat adults with respect.



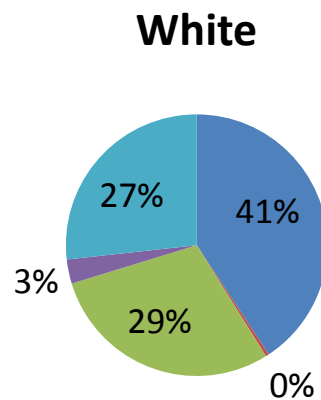
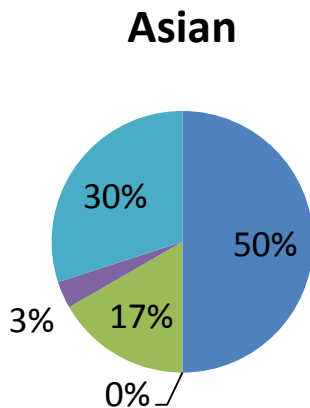
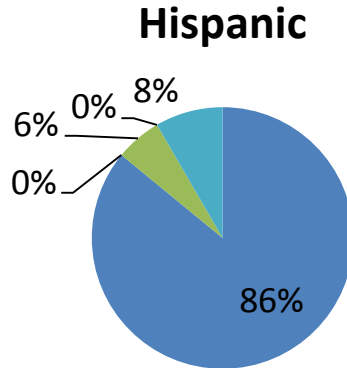
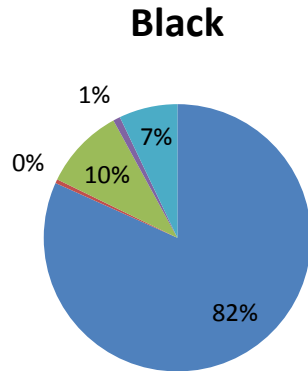
Prioritized Finding # 2 - In 2013-2014 the number of Advanced Placement exams taken at NSCHS are below the number of exams given when compared to like schools in the district.

	Spring 2012							Spring 2014				
	Total Exams Given	Number Passing	Percent Passing	Number Passing	Percent Passing	Percent Passing Change	Exams Given Change	Total Exams Given	Number Passing	Percent Passing	Percent Passing Change	
	Alpharetta	1,828	1,502	82.2%	1,638	82.5%	0.4%	9%	2,152	1,741	80.9%	-1.6%
Banneker	150	2	1.3%	1	0.8%	-0.5%	-16%	189	4	2.1%	1.3%	
Cambridge				371	73.0%	73.0%		1,058	772	73.0%	-0.1%	
Centennial	919	705	76.7%	750	76.1%	-0.6%	7%	1,087	854	78.6%	2.5%	
Chattahoochee	1,239	1,043	84.2%	1,302	81.8%	-2.3%	28%	1,573	1,316	83.7%	1.8%	
Creekside	305	21	6.9%	26	8.2%	1.3%	4%	298	26	8.7%	0.5%	
Fulton Science	69	52	75.4%	58	69.9%	-5.5%	20%	98	69	70.4%	0.5%	
Hapeville Charter	23	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	135%	88	4	4.5%	4.5%	
Johns Creek	1,366	1,135	83.1%	1,114	79.2%	-3.9%	3%	1,580	1,270	80.4%	1.1%	
Langston Hughes	260	20	7.7%	23	7.7%	0.0%	15%	327	35	10.7%	3.0%	
Milton	2,239	1,645	73.5%	1,541	69.7%	-3.8%	-1%	2,164	1,438	66.5%	-3.2%	
North Springs	778	485	62.3%	553	56.4%	-5.9%	26%	953	543	57.0%	0.5%	
Northview	1,651	1,372	83.1%	1,317	81.1%	-2.0%	-2%	1,825	1,507	82.6%	1.5%	
Riverwood	896	494	55.1%	450	50.6%	-4.6%	-1%	898	424	47.2%	-3.3%	
Roswell	1,520	1,285	84.5%	1,504	82.5%	-2.0%	20%	1,863	1,522	81.7%	-0.9%	
TriCities	631	32	5.1%	23	4.5%	-0.6%	-18%	627	17	2.7%	-1.7%	
Westlake	450	99	22.0%	106	15.1%	-6.9%	56%	796	142	17.8%	2.7%	
Fulton	14,324	9,892	69.1%	10,777	66.9%	-2.1%	12%	17,576	11,684	66.5%	-0.5%	
State	132,436		56.5%	78,758	55.5%	-1.0%	7%	154,585	86,262	55.8%	0.3%	
Global	3,704,479		61.5%	2,330,503	59.0%	-2.5%	7%	4,191,158	2,477,701	59.1%	0.1%	



North Springs High School – AP/IB Enrollment

■ 0 AP/IB Courses ■ 1 AP/IB Courses ■ 2 AP/IB Courses ■ 3 AP/IB Courses ■ 4 AP/IB Courses



Prioritized Finding # 3 - SQR reports from 2014-15 and 2011-12, both found that teachers needed to differentiate and use student-centered instruction to improve learning and empower students to take responsibility.

SQR 2014-2015

- Work with leaders assigned to each zone within the school to consistently ensure that individual teachers' lessons are developed with consideration of the following:
 - clearly stated objectives for student learning that are correlated to state standards
 - knowledge of individual students' learning needs as obtained from a variety of assessments, both common and teacher developed
 - teaching strategies and learning activities that are varied and seek to cognitively engage all students at levels that are appropriate to their individual needs
 - daily formative assessments that help the teacher to identify whether or not students have each shown mastery of the daily learning objective.



SQR 2011-2012

What the school needs to improve

- Agree and consistently implement the non-negotiables for students, faculty and leadership in order to establish and maintain consistent adherence to whole-school expectations and protocols.
- Accelerate the move from teacher-directed to differentiated, student –centered instruction in order to motivate and engage all students and better meet their diverse needs.
- Empower all students to take responsibility for their own learning by;
 - consistently promoting higher order thinking skills
 - providing frequent opportunities for interactive, collaborative learning
 - providing student-friendly rubrics against which students can assess their own work
 - providing regular, specific feedback so each student knows what they need to do to improve their level of achievement.

Prioritized Finding # 4 – While trending upward, NS’ 2014 4-year cohort graduation rate (77.5) is below the district average (78.7), the graduation rate for white students (91.2) is slightly below the district average (92.2), and the Hispanic graduation rate (61.8) is slightly below the district average (62.1).

Graduation Rate Summary by Learning Community (excludes Open Campus Schools)

4-Year Cohort Rate	2011			2012			2013			2014		
	Total Cohort	No. Graduates	% Graduated	Total Cohort	No. Graduates	% Graduated	Total Cohort	No. Graduates	% Graduated	Total Cohort	No. Graduates	% Graduated
All Students												
North Springs High School	426	275	64.6%	382	257	67.3%	405	291	71.9%	360	279	77.5%
Riverwood High School	444	318	71.6%	464	328	70.7%	469	318	67.8%	443	360	81.3%
Tri-Cities High School	511	396	77.5%	494	322	65.2%	481	342	71.1%	395	266	67.3%
Central LC	1381	989	71.6%	1340	907	67.7%	1355	951	70.2%	1198	905	75.5%

Hispanic Students

North Springs High School	61	31	50.8%	44	26	59.1%	51	29	56.9%	55	34	61.8%
Riverwood High School	75	35	46.7%	108	42	38.9%	122	46	37.7%	97	48	49.5%
Tri-Cities High School	69	45	65.2%	71	42	59.2%	78	51	65.4%	82	52	63.4%
Central LC	212	112	52.8%	231	113	48.9%	254	127	50.0%	234	134	57.3%

White Students

North Springs High School	115	89	77.4%	110	84	76.4%	130	114	87.7%	103	94	91.3%
Riverwood High School	232	192	82.8%	217	187	86.2%	183	150	82.0%	171	163	95.3%
Tri-Cities High School	15	10	66.7%	11	3	27.3%	6	4	66.7%	7	3	42.9%
Central LC	364	292	80.2%	339	274	80.8%	320	268	83.8%	281	260	92.5%



SECTION III. Long-term Outcomes

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 1. Students will become engaged citizens who demonstrate respect and contribute to the public good in a supportive learning environment.

“A safe and orderly environment conducive to learning” has been addressed as critical to academic achievement by noted educational researcher, Ron Edmonds, and Daniel Levine and Lawrence Lezotte, in their work on effective schools which called for “a productive climate and culture” (Marzano, 2003). North Springs AdvancedED surveys conducted for all students and teachers reveal a discrepancy between the definitions of respect. To increase student performance, NSCHS will provide a learning environment to increase respect between students and teachers by implementing the Positive Behavior and Intervention Support system.

- Decrease in the number of referrals submitted for disrespect by teachers
- Decrease in the number of OSS and ISS for 2015-2018
- Increase in the number of Spartan Bucks students redeem in the Spartan Rewards Lounge.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 2. Increase students’ college and career readiness.

According to Conley’s new book, *College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed Beyond High School*, college and career readiness for all students seems to be an idea whose time has come. At the federal level, in state legislatures and school districts, and in an increasing number of high schools, the focus on improvement is on preparing more students to pursue learning beyond high school, generally in a postsecondary education environment (Conley, 2010). North Springs Charter High School Quality Review data from 2011 and 2015 demonstrates a need for the learning in the classroom to be more rigorous and relevant for the students. Engagement in classrooms is a key finding from the data analyzed. North Springs AP Data shows a pocket of demographic data where we can increase the opportunities for student to take AP courses.

- Increase the number of students taking and passing the AP exam
- Increase the number of Black and Hispanic students taking 1 AP exam
- Increase the number of students completing a career pathway

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 3. Students will demonstrate an increased use of critical thinking skills across all content areas.

Critical thinking is a term that receives much discussion without much action. K-12 educators and administrators are pushed to teach the necessities as dictated by the standardized assessments in order to catch up to students in other countries. In this push for better test scores, many students are leaving the K-12 education system lacking the critical thinking skills that are necessary to succeed in higher education or in the workplace (Smith & Szymanski, 2013). North Springs AdvancedED and SQR data both show a need for more engagement in the classrooms with a higher level of critical thinking. Students are stating that teachers are not challenging them that lessons are very teacher-centered instead of student-centered.

- Increase the number of teachers using WICOR strategies across campus.



LONG-TERM OUTCOME 4. Increase the graduation rate for all students.

A 2010 report by Fastweb and Maguire Associates found that among 23 criteria of institutional quality, high school seniors chose graduation rates as the fifth most important indicator of quality, ahead of graduate school placement, a rigorous core curriculum, the existence of an honors program, and college rankings in *U.S. News & World Report* and other college guides. In an environment in which accountability and transparency have become watchwords for virtually anything government does, it is easy to understand the appeal of graduation rates. They are an obvious, commonsense indicator of how well an institution is serving its students. North Springs Charter High Schools data indicates a steady increase in graduation rate for all subgroups.

- Increase in graduation rates for all subgroups



SECTION IV. Focus Areas, Short-Term Goals, and Strategic Initiatives

FOCUS AREA 1. Academic Engagement and Development

NSCHS realizes the importance of student engagement for learning and achievement. Rigor and relevance increase when educators motivate students to achieve by fulfilling their needs for competence, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic interest, social support, and a sense of ownership.

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase student success in the classroom. 2. Decrease 9th grade failures in core subject areas. 3. Increase the number of students with accelerated options and various enrollment activities (Dual Enrollment, Honors, AP, GAVS, and TAG). 4. Improve staff skills and instructional strategies to support personalized learning. 5. Offer engaging and in-depth classes in all subject areas.
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Summary of strategic initiatives:

- Pursue a STEAM Focus which would integrate all NS’ educational disciplines and offer students continued opportunities to pursue their passions and interests
- Establish a strategic business alliance structure
- Implement Daggett’s Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship framework to improve results
- Create and implement a school-wide digital literacy plan

FOCUS AREA 2. School to Home Connection

North Springs Charter High School recognizes the value that parents and community partnerships have on the success of all students. Students with involved parents tend to do better regardless of family background and creating an environment that unites the school with the community and family sets the stage for an increase in academic achievement for students.

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase number of student to counselor to parent interactions. 2. Increase access to specific classroom academic information. 3. Increase parent and staff understanding of curriculum and core requirements to meet diploma requirements. 4. Increase opportunities for student academic support.

Summary of strategic initiatives:

- Create a comprehensive guidance program that follows the American School Counselor Association guidelines
- Create opportunities for credit recovery for 9th graders
- Create a targeted ACT and SAT support program



- Establish a *North Springs on the Road* program to engage with parents and community, and promote increased and more effective two-way communication

FOCUS AREA 3. School Culture

North Springs Charter High School understands that for any school to be successful the learning environment needs to be safe, equitable, efficient and positive for all of the teachers, staff, students, and parents. A positive school climate and culture that begins with relationships is an essential component for students to be successful in school.

As measures of progress, we will:
1. Increase compliance with progressive discipline and increase recognition of positive behaviors.
2. Increase collaboration among counselors, teachers, and administration.
3. Increase cultural sensitivity of students and teachers.
4. Increase high quality faculty recruitment and retention.

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Summary of strategic initiatives:

- Create a positive, professional school culture using Positive Behavior Intervention and Support

FOCUS AREA 4. Communication

North Springs High School communication is a dynamic part of the education for all students. In an age of instantaneous access and 24/7 demand, North Springs is looking to manage a flow of information not only from teachers to students in the classroom, but also to parents at the workplace and home.

As measures of progress, we will:
1. Increase student and stakeholders awareness of magnets and STEAM
2. Increase interdisciplinary opportunities for teachers and staff
3. Increase vertical articulation within the cluster and community
4. Improve consistency of message with branding (define brand/non-negotiables)



SECTION V. Next Steps

North Springs High School's Governance Council understands that the Strategic Plan is a living document that will provide a roadmap for academic achievement for all students over the next three years. The NSCHS Governance Council will ensure that the necessary structures are in place to facilitate the implementation of the strategic initiatives to achieve our short and long-term goals through frequent monitoring and reviewing of school data.

The next steps for North Springs with respect to the approved Strategic Plan will be to share the plan with the community through quarterly Strategic Plan meetings. We will review and obtain feedback on the plan, much as we did at a recent community meeting where we discussed our proposed Strategic Plan with parents. Through quarterly meetings, postings on the website and frequent communication through the Principal's Update, school messenger call-outs, and twitter, stakeholders will know the progress North Springs is making.

The Principal will manage North Springs' Strategic Plan while various Leadership Team members will share in the collective accountability for the document. Communication of the data collected will occur at monthly SGC meetings for analysis and further action.

Ad hoc committees will create the development of specific action items for each strategic initiative. With each strategic initiative, the committee will develop a three-phase approach that includes metrics, project plans and timelines.

Lastly, North Springs' and the School Governance Council will create an annual report that gives a detailed plan and analysis on the status of each strategic initiative in phase one.

