

Vision Retreat Participant Handout

Vision Retreat Purpose

The Vision Retreat provides an opportunity for the strategic plan team to develop a shared understanding of the current mission, vision, core values and strategic themes and build upon those ideas to move the district forward in answering the question, *“Where do we want to be five years from now that is different than where we are today?”*

The Vision Retreat offers an opportunity for the plan team to review the components of a continuous improvement framework based on research best practices and benchmark where the district is in relation to those practices.

The outcome of the day is for the plan team to describe a clear vision for the future through a product known as a Preferred Future Statement.

Common Vocabulary

Core Values	The district’s beliefs and principles that articulate the culture of the organization. These are the standards that describe how employees and the organization are expected to behave internally and externally. They serve as the basis for decision-making and influence actions in everyday situations.
Mission	The district’s purpose is described in the language of the business, including who is served and what products, programs and services are provided to customers and stakeholders.
Strategic Theme	Three of four strategic focus areas that build on the customer value proposition to define the organization’s high-level business strategy; breaks down the vision and mission into action and focuses energy on desired strategic results.
Vision	A vivid, emotionally inspiring, time-specific picture of a future to which the organization aspires. A description of how the district will look, sound and feel differently that it is today.
Vision Result	An achievable stretch target identified in order to measure the success of an organization’s vision statement. Sometimes this is referred to as a Preferred Future Statement

Strategic Foundation or Preferred Future

When we complete our work today, we will have the concepts to produce a Strategic Foundation or Preferred Future Statement. We will share this product with those we represent and seek their feedback between the Vision Retreat and the Setting Direction Retreat.

Mission Statement- Our Core Purpose <i>Why do we exist?</i>	Vision Statement- Our Future <i>Where we are headed?</i>
Core Values - How we act and behave <i>What we stand for?</i>	Portrait Descriptions: Graduate, Employee, System <i>What will it look like ?</i>

A “vision” is a bold leap into the future, painting a vivid picture of a destination—a ***“north star”*** that guides collective action and shapes the strategies to make it a reality.

Activity One: Feedback Review of Data Retreat SWOT from Stakeholders: Identify the top ten strengths, top ten weaknesses, top ten opportunities, and top ten threats by examining the SWOT analysis from the Data Retreat and any feedback from stakeholders.

Willow Springs District 108 DRAFT SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive environment • Size of school and classes • Financial state rating and overall health • Staff-Student relationships and trust • Student and community diversity • Student safety • 1:1 Student to Device Technology ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student achievement • Kindergarten, middle and high school readiness. • Ambitious 21st Century curriculum and instruction • Collaborative practices and a culture of learning • Special Education learner supports • English Language learner supports • Low Income learner supports • Student Social & Emotional Needs. • Involved Families
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-range technology plan • Long-range facilities plan • Increasing student, staff, and family satisfaction • Use of time and space • Innovation professional development opportunities. • Engaged community knowledgeable about district performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and substitute shortages • Competitive salary & benefits • Equitable funding streams • Elections • Chronic absenteeism

Activity Two Part A: Characteristics of a Preferred Future Statement

<u>Future Focused:</u>	Provides the “Big Picture” and clearly describes what your district will be like in several years
<u>Direction:</u>	Serves as a guide to district goals and strategies
<u>Specific:</u>	Clear and focused enough to shape decision-making
<u>Relevant and Purpose Driven:</u>	Reflects the district’s response to the challenges of the day

<u>Values-Based</u>	Implies the set of values that are required to support the district
<u>Challenging:</u>	Inspires employees of the district to do great things and achieve a higher level of standards
<u>Unique and Memorable:</u>	Highlights what makes the district difference and why it matters
<u>Inspiring:</u>	Appealing and engages stakeholders to commit to a cause and mindset

Why is a Preferred Future Statement a necessary component of a district's strategic plan? How might the district use mission, vision, and core values during the implementation of the strategic plan?

Which of the 8 Characteristics resonates best with you?

Activity Two Part B: Investigating a great Preferred Future Statement

Illinois Vision 2020
<p>We believe the key to continuous improvement in public education relies on the wisdom and innovation of public educators who work with students every day. This is a continuous process.</p> <p>Through the Vision 20/20 process, four areas for prioritization emerged: highly effective educators, 21st century learning, shared accountability, and equitable and adequate funding.</p>
Highly Effective Educators
21st Century Learning
Shared Accountability

Equitable and Adequate Funding
Other notes:

XQ Schools- Rethinking High Schools

- Design Principles
- Strong mission and culture
- Meaningful, Engaged Learning
- Caring, Trusting Relationships
- Youth Voice and Choice
- SMART use of Time, Space and Technology
- Community Partnerships

XQ Schools- Learner Outcome Areas

LITERACIES		
1.1	Reading	XQ students will master the academic core necessary to succeed in college, career, and life: fundamental LITERACIES of critical reading, effective writing, mathematical and statistical reasoning, the capacity to navigate a complex and diverse global environment, and the ability to understand, create, apply, and communicate complex material in speaking, writing and digitally, and fluency in application.
1.2	Writing	
1.3	Numeracy	
1.4	Global and multicultural literacy	
1.5	Digital and technological literacy	
KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS		
2.1	STEM	XQ students will be fluent in the KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS necessary to understand the world and society, prepare for careers, enjoy and engage in creative endeavors, and participate in building and sustaining thriving communities and democratic society: the STEM fields, the arts and humanities, history, social studies, and civics.
2.2	Humanities	
2.3	Society and civic engagement	

WAYS OF THINKING

3.1 Synthesis

3.2 Analysis

3.3 Application

3.4 Creativity

XQ students will develop WAYS OF THINKING that equip them to remain agile and resilient when facing rapidly changing circumstances of adversity or opportunity: understanding and synthesizing across diverse bodies of knowledge, analyzing with incisiveness, applying knowledge in novel settings, and creatively generating new ideas and fresh perspectives.

COLLABORATIVE CAPACITIES

4.1 Self-awareness

4.2 Social awareness

4.3 Interpersonal skills

4.4 Social negotiation

XQ students will hone a set of COLLABORATION SKILLS in the service of co-creating solutions to local, societal, and global challenges: self-awareness and social awareness of one's own power and potential and that of others, relationship skills that leverage one's own and others' strengths and talents, and openness to inquiry to understand, respect, navigate, and celebrate diverse viewpoints and experiences.

LEARNING FOR LIFE

5.1 Self management

5.2 Self-directed learning

5.3 Social agency

XQ students will embrace an orientation of LEARNING FOR LIFE: students will manage and direct their own best learning strategies and environments, adopt a mindset of effort and persistence, recognize their potential to affect the world around them, cultivate curiosity, pursue interests, and continuously invent their own paths, careers, and lives.

The ultimate goal.

Developing XQ Learners—students who are deeply engaged in their own learning and fully prepared for all that the future has to offer

This blueprint is not exhaustive — it is meant to illustrate how deep, rigorous, and interconnected XQ learning really needs to be.

Masters of all fundamental literacies.

- + Building the academic core necessary to prepare for college, career, and life.
- + Critical readers.
- + Compelling writers.
- + Mathematical and numeric thinkers.
- + Data and visual thinkers.

Generous collaborators for tough problems.

- + Self-aware team members who bring their strengths. Talent-seekers who find the expertise of others.
- + Essential co-creators—because of what they bring, and how they show up.
- + Inquisitive world citizens who seek out—and respect—diversity and diverse points of view.

Holders of foundational knowledge.

- + Curious people who are knowledgeable about the world, its history and culture, its sciences and underlying mathematics, its biology and cultural currency.
- + Engaged participants who are key to creating a more just and functional democracy—who participate fully in all America has to offer.

Original thinkers for an uncertain world.

- + Sense-makers—dealing with conflicting knowledge.
- + Generative thinkers—creating many ideas in ambiguous and new situations.
- + Creative thinkers—reframing, imagining, and seeing problems from different perspectives.

Learners for life.

- + Self-driven, self-directed. Curious learners—about themselves, and the world.
- + Inventors of their own learning paths, careers, and lives.

Activity Two Part C: Greatest Hopes, Aspirations, Dreams for the Future

Dreams, Hopes Aspirations
Things to Change
Ideal School System Look Like



Activity Three: Investigating a great Preferred Future Statement

As part of our Vision Retreat for strategic planning we are providing everyone with a homework assignment.

The first part of the assignment is to read a short article to push your thinking about learning and the future. Each participant has been assigned an article with the new table team assignment. There are three articles. Each person is to read the article assigned and be ready to share five key takeaways to share with the team. Please see the **table assignment chart** for assigned readings and investigations. You have new table team assignments for the Vision Retreat.

Article 1: 9 Elements in The Classroom that Should “Unsettle” Us The 10 Principles of Modern Learning

Article 2: Forging the Future of Learning

Article 3: The 10 Principles of Modern Learning

The second part of the assignment is to explore electronically a school that has a new definition of learning. If you read Article 1 you do Investigation 1, Article 2 you do Investigation 2, Article 3 you do Investigation 3.

Investigation 1: XQ SuperSchools

<https://xqsuperschool.org/rethinktogether/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/03/XQ-Design-Principles-Rubric.pdf>

By redesigning traditional approaches to schools, XQ schools are working to prepare students for a brighter future.

These six principles, updated in fall 2019 to reflect lessons learned since our launch in 2015, are fundamental to every XQ school. Each school manifests these principles in its own unique way.

We believe schools are the next frontier in the fight for educational equity. And we know that equity demands action, not just aspiration. We take action by partnering with students, educators, families, leaders, and community members in schools, districts, and systems across the country who are ready to deliver on the tremendous promise that transforming our schools holds.

What are five ideas you want to bring forward to your team as part of a future vision?

Investigation 2 Stonefields School

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMB7b1rmmrM>

<https://www.stonefields.school.nz/about-stonefields-school/>

https://www.stonefields.school.nz/site_files/7260/upload_files/Whywedowhatwedo.pdf?dl=1

Check out the Learning Process

- Check out the Learning Pit
- Check out values and mindsets
- Check out learner qualities
- Check out Our Vision

What are five ideas you want to bring forward to your team as part of a future vision?

Investigation 3 Springfield Renaissance School

<https://www.edutopia.org/video/putting-students-charge-their-learning-journey>

- Check out the video: Bolstering academic rigor with character development
- Check out the video: Putting students in charge of their learning
- Check out the video: Supporting personalized learning through Advisory
- Read: Building a school like a tight-knit family

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/building-school-tight-knit-family>

What are five ideas you want to bring forward to your team as part of a future vision?

Article/ Site Visited	3-5 Key Ideas
10 Principles of Modern Learning	1 2 3 4 5
Springfield Renaissance School	1 2 3 4 5

9 Elephants in the Classroom that Should “Unsettle” Us	1 2 3 4 5
XQ Super Schools	1 2 3 4 5
Stonefields School	1 2 3 4 5
Forging the Future of Learning	1 2 3 4 5

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Activity Four: Graduate, Adult, and System Portrait

Teams will explore Graduate, Adult, and System Portraits to describe a vision for the future.

VISION: The vision pillar asks “What?”—that is, “What must we become in order to accomplish our fundamental purpose?” In pursuing this question, the district attempts to create a compelling, attractive, realistic future that describes what they hope their district will become. Vision provides a sense of direction and a basis for assessing both the currently reality of the district and potential strategies, programs, and procedures to improve upon that reality. There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile and achievable vision of the future that is widely shared. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

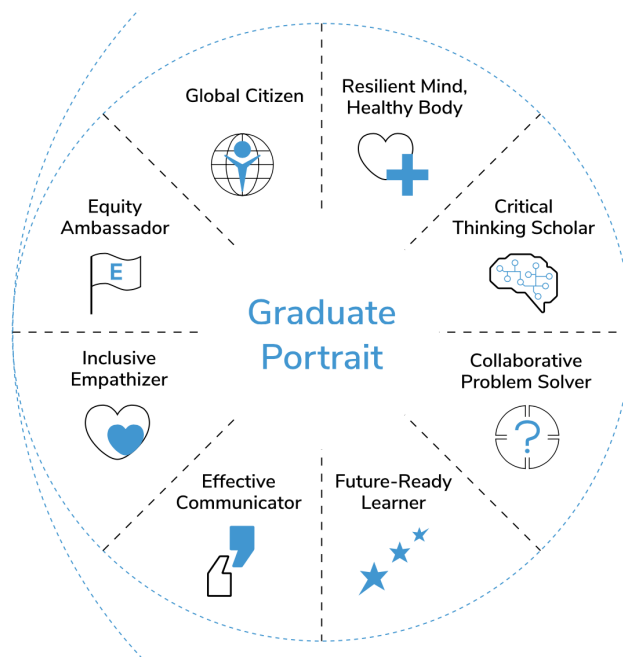
A vision:

- Describes where the organization wants to be, typically three to five year in the future. Focuses on the district’s “North Star.”
- Vividly captures the organization’s “picture of the future”.
- Is brief and easy to understand and communicates a message that is emotionally inspiring, to create a passion to contribute to the organization’s future success.
- It is audacious and takes you way beyond where you are to the “mountain top.”
- It builds on core competencies. It gives employees a larger sense of purpose so they see themselves as building a cathedral instead of laying stones.
- The vision takes the form of “Our vision is to become (achieve, improve, etc.) by (date).”

Criteria for evaluating a vision statement:

- Does it manifest our mission?
- Is it concise and compelling?
- Is it inspirational?
- Does it communicate promise?
- Does it create an image of something that cannot be seen today, but is possible tomorrow?
- Does it focus on ends not means?
- Does it manifest the mission and values

Graduate Portrait



What 21st century skills, character traits, and/or social-emotional competencies do all students need to succeed in college, career, and life? How has the world changed, and how will it continue to change? What skills and mindsets will be necessary in a rapidly changing and complex world? What are the skills and traits that community members take pride in and hope to pass on to their students and children?

Graduate Portrait Outcome Possibilities				
Critical Thinker & Problem Solver	Engaged Collaborator	Career & College Ready	Creator & Innovator	Adaptable & Resilient Learner
Team Player	Passionate & Empathetic	Engaged Citizen	Responsible & Accountable	Culturally Aware
Skilled Communicator	Ethical Character	Confident & Secure	Civic and Global Contributor	Perseverant & Patient
Empowered & Self-Sufficient	Growth Mindset	Digital Literate	Inclusive Emphasizer	Equity Ambassador
Confident & Secure	Self-Motivated Learner	Resilient Mind, Healthy Body	Other	Other



Growth & Grit

Scholars persevere to courageously and effectively work in a changing environment. Embrace a lifelong learning mindset. Demonstrate care for themselves and self-compassion.

Scholars receive feedback constructively, learn something new in every context, own their learning, and embrace curiosity and innovation.

Learner's Mindset

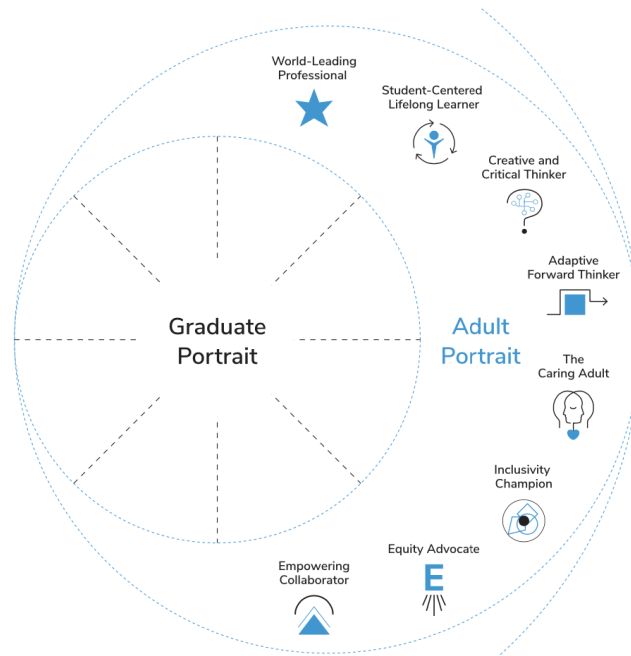
Complex Thinkers

Scholars question the world without fear or reservation. Use logic to reason with problems and think through the issues in diverse and creative ways.

Scholars demonstrate care for themselves and others, establish and maintain positive relationships, honor commitments, and engage in civic opportunities for the betterment of society.

Responsibility & Integrity

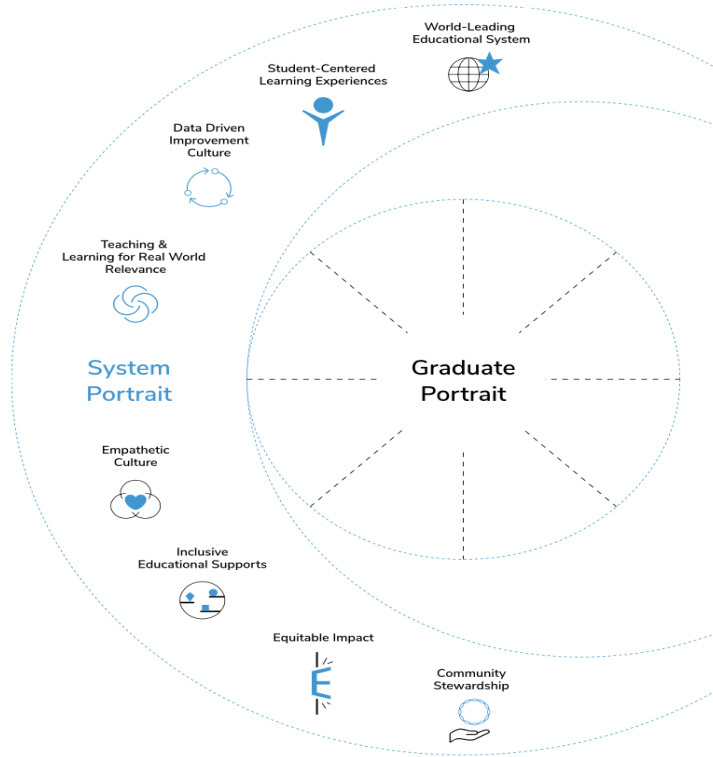
Adult Portrait



What are the critical 21st Century characteristics of an effective team member? What 21st Century characteristics contribute to a successful and efficient culture or climate? What 21st Century adult characteristics contribute to the development of successful and passionate learners?

Employee Portrait Outcome Possibilities				
Student Centered Lifelong Learner	Dedicated Professional	Equity Advocate	Inclusivity Champion	Growth Mindset
Empowering Collaborator	Adaptive Forward Thinker	Prepared Professional	Perseverant & Patient	Creator & Innovator
Skilled Communicator	Sense of Humor	Responsible & Accountable	Comfort with Technology	Civic & Global Contributor
Enthusiastic & Passionate	Approachable & Trusting	Resourcefulness	Open to Feedback	Role Model
Self-Reflection	Difference Maker	Promoting a Love of Learning	Other	Other

System Portrait



What 21st Century District System Characteristics define an effective 21st century school system?
What 21st Century District System Characteristics do we want to guarantee every student, every family, every staff member to ensure high productivity and satisfaction?

System Portrait Outcome Possibilities				
Clear Purpose with Focus	Value Shared Decision-making	Value Innovation & Risk taking	Growth Mindset	Value Students, Staff & Families
Value Diversity and Individual Differences	Community Stewardship	Value Ethical & Trusting Relationships	Develop Sense of Community & Belonging	Foster Clear Communication
Real World Relevance	Inclusive Educational Supports	Data Drive Improvement Culture	High Quality Reputation	Student-Centered
Service Orientation	Values Networking and Partnerships	Open to new Ideas	Commit to Action	High Standards and Expectations for all learners
Stakeholders Empowered & Involved	Promote Consistent Policies, Procedures & Practices	Value voice and feedback	Other	Other

Activity Five: Mission and Vision

BUILDING ON OUR CURRENT MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

MISSION: The mission pillar asked the question, “WHY?” More specifically, it asks “Why do we Exist?” The intent of this question is to help reach agreement regarding the fundamental purpose of the organization. This clarity of purpose can help establish priorities and becomes an important factor to guide decisions.” Your mission statement is the best vehicle to get the word out about the “why” and the “wow” behind your district. In truth, your mission statement is no less important than your business plan. It needs to explain — eloquently, succinctly, and passionately — the core reasons for your existence. Your mission statement should inspire others to want to know more about your ideas, helping to position your district in the marketplace and to fuel growth. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

A mission:

- Tells a story, in a few words that defines why the organization exists.
- Describes the core purpose of the organization that is persistent over time.
- Answers the following questions: Why does this organization serve and how are the served? What is the organizational purpose?
- Incorporates features of the organization that highlight its uniqueness and define its purpose.
- Helps define why the organization exists.
- Focuses on satisfying customer needs.
- Take the form of: “Our mission is to provide (what) to (whom) in order to (provide what benefit) while (maintaining what values).

Criteria for evaluating a mission statement:

- Is it clear and understandable?

- Is it brief enough for most people to remember and say in one breath?
- Does it clearly specify the school's fundamental purpose?
- Does it have a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (such as learning)?
- Does it reflect the distinctive competence and culture of this school?
- Is it broad enough to allow flexibility in implementation, but not so broad as to create lack of focus?
- Will it help school personnel, parents, and community members make decisions?
- Is it energizing and compelling? Does it motivate and inspire employee commitment?
- Does it say what you want your district to be remembered for?

Current Mission Statement	Ideas and Concepts for Future Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mission Statement: Willow Springs School nurtures and inspires lifelong learners to be productive, responsible citizens of our evolving global society.</i> • <i>Motto: Where a love of learning grows</i> 	

Activity Six: Core Values

Aligning Beliefs/Values/Collective Commitments to Mission and Vision

While creating a vision can be a helpful step in the improvement process, it is not sufficient. The board of education, administrators, and staff must tackle the collective values and commitments they must make and honor to achieve the shared vision for their district. Core values are the fundamental beliefs of an organization.

They are the district’s beliefs and principles that articulate the culture of the organization. They are the standards that describe how employees, and the organization are expected to behave internally and externally. They serve as the basis for decision-making and influence actions in everyday situations.

CORE VALUES: The third pillar of the foundation, the values pillar identifies our beliefs and then clarifies those beliefs through collective commitments. It asks, “How must we behave to create the district that will achieve our purpose?” In answering the question, educators shift from offering philosophical musings on mission or the shared hopes for the district of the future to making commitments to act in certain ways. Clarity guides the individual work of each member and outlines how each person can contribute to the improvement initiative. Policy manuals and directives are replaced by commitments and covenants. Clarifying collective commitments is one of the most important strategies in building a PLC. (adapted from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, *Learning By Doing*, Second Edition: Solution-Tree, 2010)

Core Values:

- Describe what the organization stands for in the context of its mission and vision.
- Guiding principles, defining the code of conduct and behavior that is expected of all employees.
- Provide ethical guidelines for decision-making and daily conduct.
- Are aligned with organization vision, mission and culture.
- Should be described in vivid behavioral terms.
- Are represented in a phrase but not a sentence or paragraph.
- Should not include more than 5-7 so they can be memorable.
- Supports mission and vision.

Criteria for evaluating a core value or belief:

- Does it manifest our mission and vision?
- Is it compelling and based on a belief we would not compromise?
- Is it a guiding principle that guides behaviors and actions?
- Is it clear and easy to understand?
- Does it create an unwavering and unchanging guide?
- Is it something we will hold each other responsible and accountable for our actions?
- Is it something we would want future staff members to support?
- Does it have a commitment to describe what we would do to move the belief to action?

Examples of Core Values/Beliefs	Ideas and Concepts for Future Core Values/Beliefs
Examples Students First	

Empower Learners	
Excellence through Continuous Improvement	
Integrity and Ethical Stewardship	
Connected Families and a Collaborative Community	
Equity and Social Justice	
Empathy and Respect	
Equity and Inclusive	
Future Ready, World Learning	

Putting it ALL Together

Learn how the facilitator and Core/Edit Team will draft a Preferred Future State for review. Know we will revisit the mission, vision (Portraits) and core values at the beginning of the Setting Direction Retreat. We will also examine feedback from teachers and students related to the Portraits.

Next Steps/ Preview of Setting Direction Retreat

Look for the Findings document from the Vision Retreat.

Look for feedback from teachers and students related to the Employee and System Portraits.

Preview the agenda for Setting Direction Retreat. Reflect on the Day.

SETTING DIRECTION RETREAT. July 20