

Memo



To: Board of Education

From: Dr. Karla Guseman, Superintendent

Date: August 18, 2026

Re: Strategic Planning Proposal Recommendation

Joliet Township High School (JTHS) has utilized a Strategic Planning process since 2002 to identify the district's mission, objectives, strategies, parameters, and beliefs. The process has run on a five-year cycle, with annual progress updates to the Board of Education. The current JTHS Strategic Plan was approved by the JTHS Board of Education in December 2022 and since that time, all action plans have been adopted or operationalized. The current plan will continue to be worked on through the 2027-2028 school year, and it is recommended that JTHS enter into the next five-year cycle in June 2027 to support the continued improvement of the district.

Since the inception of the JTHS Strategic Planning process, JTHS has utilized an external facilitator. During the last planning cycle, Strategic Planning Consultant Megan Geerts served as the district's external facilitator, and it is recommended that Ms. Geerts be utilized again in the next five-year-cycle. Ms. Geerts was contacted and submitted the attached proposal with options A and B. It is recommended that the district contract with Ms. Geerts for proposal B with an investment and fee structure totaling \$20,000 as this recommendation includes the Actional Team Leader Training session that was also included during the last cycle. It is important to note that all travel arrangements, accommodations, and related expenses are fully covered within the consultant's stated fees and no separate travel expenses or stipends will be billed to the district.

Upon approval, the JTHS Administrative Team will begin planning for the First Planning session scheduled to occur June 7 and June 8, 2027.

Thank you.



Strategic Planning Proposal: Joliet Township High School District 204

Executive Summary

Joliet Township High School (JTHS) District 204 is one of the oldest and most historically rich public secondary school districts in Will County, Illinois. JTHS proudly serves over 6,600 students across four distinct learning environments: Joliet Central, Joliet West, the Pathways Campus, and the Transition Center. The District is recognized for its vibrant, diverse student community and its commitment to forward-thinking academic programs.

Since 2002, JTHS has utilized its Strategic Plan to identify the district's mission, objectives, strategies, parameters, and beliefs. The Strategic Plan runs on a five-year cycle, with annual reviews and Periodic Updates. The most recent Strategic Plan was created in 2022.

JTHS utilizes an external facilitator to bring an objective perspective to the Strategic Planning process. Supporting this effort is a District-designated internal facilitator, who co-manages the process and acts as the central in-house resource for Action Team Leaders.

Every summer, JTHS leadership reviews current action plans to assess progress and plan for the upcoming school year. Administrators are directly accountable for executing these plans, with progress factored into their annual evaluations.

Project Scope

The external facilitator will orchestrate the collaborative creation and formal drafting of a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan re-write. This engagement focuses on synthesizing stakeholder input, defining the district's future direction, and authoring a clear, actionable roadmap that aligns the Board of Education, administration, staff, and community around shared educational priorities.

The external facilitator will guide the district through the sequential drafting process, culminating in a finalized strategic plan document, including:

- Beliefs

- Parameters
- Mission
- Objectives
- Strategies
- Action Plans

Proposed Timeline: A Collaborative Partnership Model

The development of the Strategic Plan operates as a Collaborative Partnership, balancing the objectivity of the external facilitator with the internal expertise of the school district. Rather than working in isolation, the two entities function as a unified team through their defined roles and responsibilities.

Joliet Township High School District 204	Megan Geerts Strategic Planning
Prepare for Planning • Communicate to stakeholders about planning & timeline • Stakeholder input (conduct sessions/survey prior to first planning session, include results in data book report) • Collect vital signs data - analyzed and compiled in report ◦ Data Book examples provided ◦ Data Book template provided ■ JTHS may utilize a preferred Data Book template	Prepare for Planning • Provides ongoing strategic consultation to the superintendent and internal facilitator ◦ e-mail, phone calls, teleconference • Supplies Data Book examples • Offers JTHS Data Book template
Build Strategic Planning Team • Made up of District & Building leaders, Board members, and other key stakeholders	Build Strategic Planning Team • Delivers continuous consultation and strategic guidance to the internal facilitator and superintendent ◦ e-mail, phone calls, teleconference
First Planning Session (June 7-8, 2027) • Manages event logistics for the First Planning Session, including venue selection, catering, technology setups, photography, and administrative support • Coordinates support team members in addition to internal and external facilitators, ensuring seamless session execution • Oversees optional session enhancements, such as Strategic Planning Team merchandise and/or appreciation gifts	First Planning Session (June 7-8, 2027) • Prepares First Planning Session presentation and supplemental materials • Facilitates the Strategic Planning process in whole group and small group experiences, including: ◦ Introduction & Orientation to Strategic Planning ◦ Determine Beliefs ◦ Establish Parameters ◦ Create Mission Statement ◦ Define Objectives ◦ Conduct Internal & External Analysis ◦ Determine Critical Issues

	○ Create Strategies ● Maintains agenda momentum and synthesizes diverse viewpoints to help teams achieve consensus
Communicate Draft Plan ● Communicate the draft Strategic Plan with all audiences (District & Building leaders, Board members, staff, students, families, and community members) ● Invite stakeholders to join Action Teams	Communicate Draft Plan ● Collaborates with internal facilitator & support team members to produce the Draft Strategic Plan following the First Planning Session
Action Team Leader Training (Date & Time TBD) ● Manages event logistics for Action Team Leader Training, including venue selection, catering, technology setups, and photography ● Selects Action Team Leaders (recommended 2-3 leaders per strategy) ● Clarifies district expectations regarding the cadence and culture of Action Team meetings	Action Team Leader Training (Date & Time TBD) ● Prepares “Train the Trainer” Action Team Leader presentation and supplemental materials ● Provides strategic consultation with the JTHS Team (superintendent, internal facilitator, or other designee) prior to Action Team Leader Training ○ e-mail, phone calls, teleconference ○ Travel stipend as needed (see budget proposal options) ● Facilitates Action Team Leader Training ○ Review role of Action Team Leader ○ Discuss Action Team Meetings ○ Review meeting templates & experiences ○ Includes a look ahead to the Second Planning Session
Action Plan Creation ● Action Teams will research, create draft action plans, and determine how to implement each strategy ● Collaborate with Action Team Leaders to execute priorities for JTHS (ensure regular communication and support is provided to Action Team Leaders) ● Action Plan drafts must be finalized 2 weeks prior to Second Planning Session	Action Plan Creation ● Delivers continuous strategic guidance to the executive leadership team through regular communication channels, including phone calls, virtual meetings, and email correspondence ● Action Plan drafts must be finalized 2 weeks prior to Second Planning Session
Review of Action Plans (Date & Time TBD) ● Provides feedback regarding JTHS Policy and Rule, Legislative Policies, and governance ● Offers guidance to Action Team Leaders on how to strengthen and align action plans to serve JTHS	Review of Action Plans (Date & Time TBD) ● Partners with the JTHS internal facilitator and Action Team Leaders to review Draft Action Plans (ideally prior to the final action Team meeting) ● Facilitates the discussion and sharing of plan ideas, goals, and outcomes ● Action Team Leaders may make changes and share modifications at their final Action Team meetings

Second Planning Session (Date & Time TBD) • The Strategic Planning team will approve, modify or reject draft action plans • Leave session with finalized Strategic Plan	Second Planning Session (Date & Time TBD) • Prepares First Planning Session presentation and supplemental materials • Facilitates the Strategic Planning process in whole group and small group experiences, including: ○ Introduction & Orientation to Strategic Planning ○ Discussion, Consensus-Building, and Approval of Strategic Plan, including: ■ Beliefs ■ Parameters ■ Mission Statement ■ Objectives ○ Reports from Action Team Leaders ○ Evaluation of Action Plans ■ Planning team will approve, modify or reject draft action plans • Leave session with finalized Strategic Plan
Obtain Board Approval • Establishes the plan as the district's roadmap, authorizing the administration to align resources with its defined priorities • Approve implementation schedule	Obtain Board Approval • Maintains open lines of communication (including phone, virtual meetings, and email) to deliver continuous strategic guidance to the Joliet Township High School executive leadership team
Establish a Culture of Strategic Action • Maps staff responsibilities directly to the strategic plan framework • Create implementation schedule • Reviews ongoing action plans to set implementation goals for the next school year • Employs Mutual Commitments and Key Performance Indicators to evaluate JTHS administrators • Tracks momentum through Strategic Plan Updates	Establish a Culture of Strategic Action • Delivers continuous strategic guidance to the executive leadership team through regular communication channels, including phone calls, virtual meetings, and email correspondence • As needed, collaborate with JTHS Leaders to conduct periodic reviews with Strategic Plan Updates

Expected Outcomes

Tangible Deliverables

- A comprehensive, consensus-based document detailing the District's Beliefs, Parameters, Mission, Objectives, Strategies & Action Plans

- A concise, visually engaging summary that is easily shared with families, community members, staff, and students

Organizational Outcomes

- Explicit alignment between the new strategic plan and future district budgets, professional development plans, and board agendas, ensuring time and money follow the new priorities
- A clear, measurable framework to track job performance and their alignment to Strategic Planning metrics

Cultural & Community Outcomes

- Broad-based community consensus and shared ownership of the district's future direction among diverse stakeholder groups, including staff, administrators, families, students, and community partners
- A revitalized sense of unified purpose that breaks down departmental silos and rallies all staff around a singular, forward-thinking mission

Budget Proposal Options

Thank you for the opportunity to assist in your Strategic Planning process. This initial proposal includes customizable options; please consider the level of support that your team will require.

Please select your preferred proposal option below, then notify Megan Geerts Strategic Planning to initiate services. Formal contract documents will then be prepared and executed by both parties.

Proposal A	Proposal B
Delivers ongoing Strategic Consultation to JTHS • Available via e-mail, phone calls, teleconference	Delivers ongoing Strategic Consultation to JTHS • Available via e-mail, phone calls, teleconference
Two in-person visits • First Planning Session (June 7-8, 2027) • Second Session (Date TBD)	Three in-person visits • First Planning Session (June 7-8, 2027) • Second Session (Date TBD) • Action Team Leader Training (Date TBD)
Action Team Leader Training • Virtual Training (half day)	Action Team Leader Training • Full Day training (in-person) including collaboration time with Action Team Leaders
Review of Action Plans • Virtual Session (half day)	Review of Action Plans • Virtual Session (half day)
Investment & Fee Structure • The total investment for this proposal is \$18,000. The fee structure is based upon milestones within the Strategic Planning process:	Investment & Fee Structure • The total investment for this proposal is \$20,000. The fee structure is based upon milestones within the Strategic Planning process:

○ Phase 1: Deposit of \$6,000 to formalize the partnership between JTHS and Megan Geerts Strategic Planning ○ Phase 2: \$6,000 upon the completion of First Planning Session ○ Phase 3: \$6,000 balance upon the completion of Second Planning Session	○ Phase 1: Deposit of \$6,000 to formalize the partnership between JTHS and Megan Geerts Strategic Planning ○ Phase 2: \$6,000 upon the completion of First Planning Session ○ Phase 3: \$8,000 balance upon the completion of Second Planning Session
Travel Stipend: All travel arrangements, accommodations, and related expenses are fully covered within the consultant's stated fees. No separate travel expenses or stipends will be billed to the client.	Travel Stipend: All travel arrangements, accommodations, and related expenses are fully covered within the consultant's stated fees. No separate travel expenses or stipends will be billed to the client.
<i>Intellectual Property: All foundational presentation materials, templates, and frameworks utilized during the session remain the exclusive property of Megan Geerts Strategic Planning. Conversely, the final strategic plan developed during these sessions shall be the proprietary property of Joliet Township High School District 204.</i>	<i>Intellectual Property: All foundational presentation materials, templates, and frameworks utilized during the session remain the exclusive property of Megan Geerts Strategic Planning. Conversely, the final strategic plan developed during these sessions shall be the proprietary property of Joliet Township High School District 204.</i>

Biography & Contact Info

Megan Geerts is a Strategic Planning Consultant based in Omaha, Nebraska, with a proven track record of guiding over 75 corporations, non-profits, and school districts through collaborative, consensus-based planning processes. A dedicated educator with 20 years of experience across elementary, middle, and high school levels, Megan currently serves as a World Language & Special Area Department Head, Tier One Instruction Leader, and MTSS Consultant.

Previously, she excelled as the Leadership & Learning Facilitator for Millard Public Schools, where she orchestrated the district's comprehensive strategic planning and coordinated site-based planning for its 35 schools.

Megan's academic foundation includes a B.A. from Luther College, an M.S. from UNO, and an Ed.S. in Educational Administration from UNL. As a certified Gallup Strengths Coach, she thrives on developing leaders and maximizing organizational potential. Outside of her professional life, Megan is driven by her passion for her family—which she shares with her husband, Matt, a school administrator, and their four boys (alongside an imposing collection of Lego sets)—and enjoys reading, cooking, and traveling.



Megan Geerts

✉ megangeerts@gmail.com

📞 (402) 926-9589