

POSITIVE MOMENTUM

Strategic plan and student success implementation moves forward

By Trish Yerges

The Strategic Plan team continues to meet and report on the progress they are making toward their district goals and moving forward. Scott Carpenter and Superintendent George Mendoza are integral members of that team and have the following update to give to district families.

“The overwhelming feeling of the team was that we have made major steps forward in a positive direction, and the team was excited with our progress,” said Carpenter.

Mendoza also noted that the district is developing more clear messaging down the road for certain goals and indicators, whether it’s about attendance or different things the district is doing.

“With our culture of care system, we’re making it really easy for people to know what we’re trying to

do,” said Mendoza. “The initiatives we’re undertaking based on the Student Success Act (SSA) very much align with our Strategic Plan.”

The analogy is that if the Strategic Plan is the machine or engine, then the Student Success Act funds are the fuel that support that engine.

“We’re trying to really be thoughtful about how we’re doing things and monitor the impact of those things to support and adjust those goals and indicators that we’re focusing on improving,” he said.

The Student Success Act funds allow the district to hire additional faculty that will help them meet their strategic goals and benefit students.

“We’re excited about the extended positions that we’re offering and getting qualified applicants,” Carpenter said. “We’ve hired

a few of them already that will continue to supercharge our Strategic Plan and our goals and what we want to do.”

The district has already hired a behavioral coordinator, a counselor at the Middle School, and two core contact teachers.

Other faculty have been hired, not having to do with the SSA, including a new vice principal at the high school and another nurse. For the 2020-21 school year, Island City Elementary will have a new principal, Brett Smith, who is replacing retired principal John Tolan. The district will also be hiring a director of Title, Elementary Programs, and Student Services.

The district is trying to do a lot of things very well, said Carpenter, but with the broad range of initiatives now being undertaken by the district, there is a need for dedicated oversight and

that requires another director to focus on those efforts.

“We ramped up our behavioral services and we’re adding behavior classrooms,” said Mendoza.

The district hired one behavior classroom teacher and they are adding one behavior para professional. Consequently, they are adding a Director of Special Education and Behavioral Services.

“We need good administrators to support staff and kids, as well as attending to the community and families,” Mendoza said. “Those are big reasons to add another director.”

This new director position, once filled, will relieve Carpenter from those duties so that he can take on a new role as Director of Personnel and Secondary Programs. Carpenter will now be able to give dedicated attention to HR procedures, policies, onboarding, off-boarding,

investigations, and other personnel related work.

“I want us to ramp up our policies and have an updated HR handbook for the staff and get more aligned with best practices of policy and decision making for our employees,” Mendoza said. “We haven’t had a HR Director in 14 years.”

Typically, a school district the size of LGSD has full time HR director positions dedicated solely to curriculum and instruction.

Consequently, LGSD is excited to be adding the new director position and hiring additional staff. The district recognizes gratefully that this is possible because of the funding from the Student Success Act.

“The machine got fuel and that fuel is the Student Success Act,” said Mendoza. “Now we are able to use the money to buy programs and services that we wouldn’t have had.”

