



Path to 2025: Overview

1. Executive Summary

Natrona County residents are about to experience something they haven't seen in more than 45 years.

Intense planning is getting underway not only for the design and construction of secondary learning experience, including major renovations at Kelly Walsh and Natrona County high schools.

"The new high school will be unlike anything this county, state or nation has ever seen before in terms of the opportunities it will offer our community's young adults," said Dr. Joel Dvorak, Superintendent of the Natrona County School District. The new high school is set to open in 2012.

"We are all well aware that our schools face serious challenges, including a dropout rate at 25 percent, which we know is largely the result of our failure to engage these students in their education," Dvorak said. "That's just one of the reasons we are committed to creating a fundamentally different learning experience for 21st century middle and high schoolers, one that engages and inspires every learner to become a champion."

The current high school program found across the U.S. was designed more than 100 years ago to suit the industrial age need for factory workers and to assimilate immigrants as productive citizens. "The model simply does not fit all of the technological, social and economic realities of the present, much less the future," Dvorak explained.

Steve Degenfelder, Chair of the NCSD Board of Trustees, says he plans to be a champion for this project and that it is overdue. "The quality of life in Natrona County depends on the quality of education we provide for our students," Degenfelder said. "Though our current high school system is pretty good, we are doing our children a disservice every day we continue to operate under this model, one that prepares our youth for our present rather than their future. To strengthen our community and our economy, we must instill a creative, innovative and even entrepreneurial spirit in our youth."

Dr. Dvorak added that he hopes this experience unites NCSD and its community and strengthens the public's trust and confidence in its schools. "Another of my personal goals is to bridge the gap between 'The Hill' and this community. Our

citizens should be able to trust their school system explicitly. My pledge as the new superintendent is that we will earn the public's trust and confidence in our ability to provide engaging learning opportunities for our students."

"As your new superintendent of Natrona County School District and on behalf of your Board of Trustees, it is my mission to address these challenges, but only with your involvement can we be successful. I hope you will accept this invitation to join NCSD on our journey to reinvent the high school experience for our students – one that will position our children and future generations to succeed in life beyond any of our wildest dreams."

The school district is scheduling a series of workshops and advisory groups where Natrona County citizens can participate and influence the outcome of the new high school educational platform. These meetings will begin early February and continue through the spring.

The following pages serve as a map for the District's effort to engage the community in this project, to keep the community informed as the project unfolds, and to create opportunities for anyone in the community to offer meaningful input.

Project Beliefs

- Our current high school program was designed more than 100 years ago to suit the industrial age need for factory workers, and to assimilate immigrants as productive citizens. The model simply does not fit all of the technological, social and economic realities of our time, much less the future.
- Our quality of life in Natrona County depends on the quality of education we provide for our students.
- We need a fundamentally different learning experience for 21st century learners, one that engages and inspires every learner to become a champion.
- We can not continue to operate under this old model, one that prepares our youth for our present rather than their future.
- We must engage every student.
- To strengthen our community and our economy we must instill a creative, innovative and even entrepreneurial spirit in our youth.
- Attitude affects results
- Adaptation to change is necessary for success.

Path to 2025 Project Mission

It is the mission of the Natrona County School District's secondary educational platform redesign initiative to conceptualize a fundamentally different learning experience for 21st century middle and high school students, one that engages and inspires every learner to become a champion.

Project Parameters

1. We will not compromise quality, integrity, or high expectations.
2. We will treat all people with dignity and respect.
3. We will practice and promote open and honest communication.
4. We will revisit all programs within the current secondary system.
5. We will aggressively pursue healthy relationships.
6. We will find a meaningful role for all who desire to participate in the process.
7. We will practice fiscal responsibility.

Project Objectives

1. To engage all middle and high school students.
2. To prepare all middle and high school students for their emerging future.
3. To provide a system that meets the needs of all students, grades 6-12.
4. To engage the community in the design of its new secondary educational platform project.
5. To strengthen the public's confidence in its school district.
6. To strengthen the staff's enthusiasm for the critical role they play in the vitality of the Natrona County community.
7. To strengthen NCSD's image as the state's educational leader.

Keys to Success

- **Plan.** We need a strong plan with broad engagement.
- **Leaders.** We need community leaders who believe in our school system and this project.
- **Message.** We need a consistent, clear and concise message.
- **Liberty.** We need the liberty to act swiftly within defined, manageable parameters.
- **Courage.** We need courage to say what needs to be said, internally and externally.
- **Resources.** We need appropriate resources, human and capital, to invest in message delivery.
- **Champions.** We need Natrona County School District leadership and Board of Trustees to be visible champions, energetic, and enthusiastic about this project.