

Readiness: Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning in Practice: San Gabriel USD & Lincoln Consolidated Schools Turn the Portrait into Big Moves

OVERVIEW

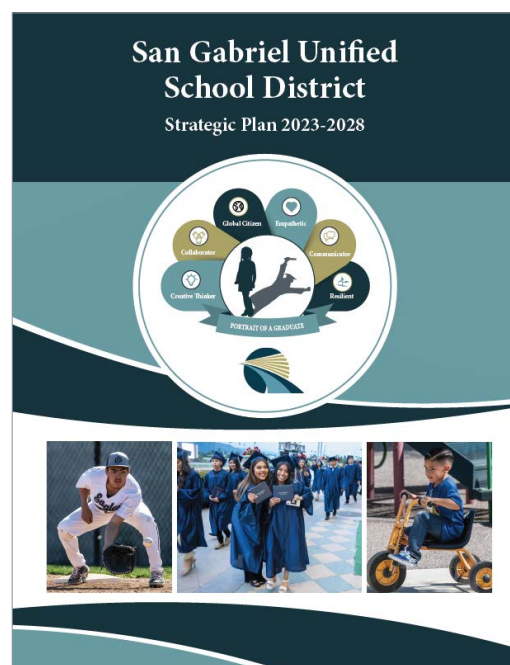
San Gabriel Unified School District (Calif.) and Lincoln Consolidated Schools (Mich.) partnered with members of AASA's District Service's team to operationalize their Portraits of a Graduate through strategic planning.

THE CHALLENGE

- San Gabriel USD needed to move from vision to system-wide shifts in student voice, choice, and deeper learning experiences. Their Portrait of a Graduate was defined, but the district sought the strategy to put it into practice.
- Lincoln Consolidated had created their Portrait of a Graduate in 2022, but faced the challenge of “what next” amid rapidly changing technologies like artificial intelligence (AI). The question was how to ensure their Portrait's life skills are realized concretely across classrooms and operations.

WHAT WE DID

- Facilitated design teams in each district including principals, teachers, central office staff, union representation, students, and community stakeholders.
- Anchored strategic planning around each district's Portrait of a Graduate, ensuring their selected life skills drive all strategic decisions.
- Identified “Big Moves” or key strategic priorities in each district to focus effort and resources. For Lincoln Consolidated, this included piloting Portrait-aligned lessons, holding workshops for teachers, and designing systems to support adaptability and deeper learning.
- Provided professional learning experiences (e.g. Roadmap for Lincoln Consolidated), and built capacity among educators to implement the Portrait in classroom practice.



KEY IMPACTS

- Lincoln Consolidated's life skills are widely understood; San Gabriel USD's vision similarly centers around student voice and choice.
- Lincoln Consolidated has begun piloting Portrait-based lessons and teacher workshops, showing staff willingness to invest beyond standard expectations.
- Both districts are better able to respond to emerging challenges (like AI in Lincoln Consolidated) because of having a strategic plan grounded in essential life skills.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Having everyone—leadership, teachers, community—at the table in both vision and planning phases builds shared ownership.
- Piloting early helps test what works in classrooms, gathering momentum.
- Clear, manageable sets of life skills help sustain coherence and avoid muddying of the community's shared vision—the Portrait of a Graduate.



Call to Action

If you have a Portrait of a Graduate (or are looking to begin the process), the strategic planning step is a must to translate vision into practice. AASA's Strategic Planning process offers frameworks, support, and partnership to help you define, align, and act.