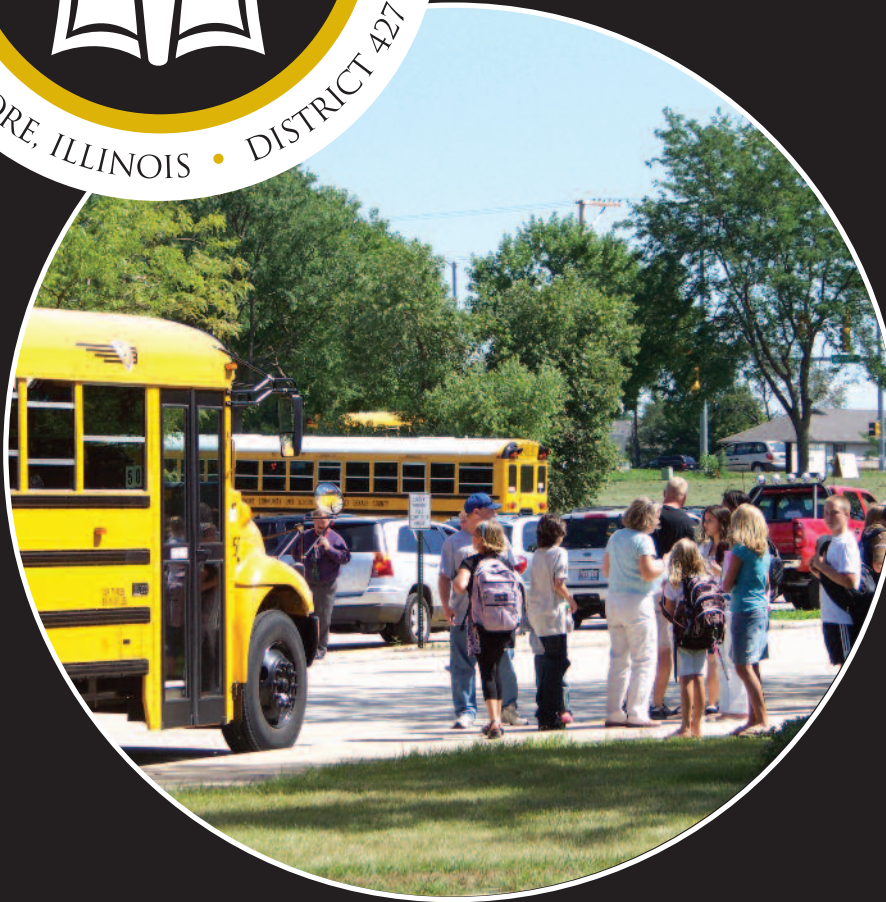


# STRATEGIC DESIGN PLAN



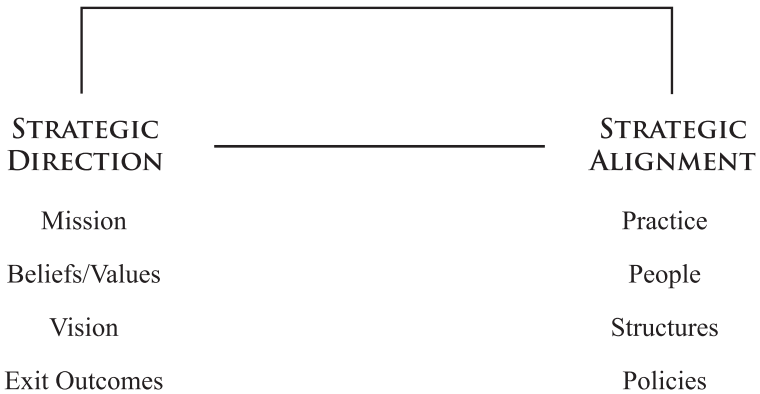
“EMPOWERING ALL LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN THEIR WORLD”

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## STRATEGIC DESIGN



## LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT:

The original Strategic Design Process began in the Sycamore Community Unit School District in October 2001. At that time, former Superintendent Dr. Robert Hammon and a future-focused Board of Education began a planning process that involved approximately seventy-five people who represented a cross section of our entire school district and community. Their dedicated work evolved into the District's first strategic design plan. Key components of the strategic design involved our beliefs and values, mission and vision statements, and exit learner outcomes for our students. As a result, this document has served the District well as it has been the foundation for all planning and decision making.

We are all aware that our world is in a time of rapid change that certainly creates major implications for our students and the society that they will encounter. In an effort to prepare our students for the future, the District 427 Board of Education commissioned a public engagement process to update the original strategic design. A task force of approximately eighty people came together on October 9, 10, and 11, 2008 to effectively plan to ensure that our students continue to be prepared for their futures. As a direct result, the following document demonstrates our desire to be a values-based, future-focused, and strategy-driven school district. As in the past, District 427 will set goals that are aligned with this document.

I would like to thank the Board of Education for their support and all eighty members of our task force for their input and insights into building a strong future for our students. We also wish to express our appreciation to Dr. Chuck Schwahn of Schwahn and Associates for his leadership in facilitating the process. The efforts on the part of many local stakeholders have once again set us on a path of high expectations for all staff and students in the Sycamore Community School District.

Respectfully,

Dr. Wayne Riesen, Superintendent  
Sycamore Community Unit School District #427

## MISSION STATEMENT

District 427 exists to serve the children of this community, and to that end, we have established a strategic direction which supports our mission:

*“Empowering all learners to succeed in their world”*



## SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BELIEF STATEMENTS

*Our greatest asset is our people; our highest priority is our students.*

Regarding students and learning, we believe:

- All students learn, have talent, and want to succeed.
- Success is earned through achievement.
- Learners progress at different rates, in different ways, for different futures.
- All students deserve a safe environment where they feel valued.

Regarding teachers and teaching we believe:

- Teachers build relationships that engage students in learning.
- Teachers are innovative, enthusiastic lifelong learners.
- Teachers empower all students to reach their individual potential.

Regarding learning communities we believe:

- Parents are the students' first teachers.
- Interactive communication fosters community support.
- Community partnerships are essential.
- Our learning community provides a sense of family.

## CORE VALUES

Our core values provide the foundation upon which members of our learning community should build their lives.

HONESTY	Honest people are truthful and sincere.
INTEGRITY	People with integrity behave in a manner consistent with universal values. They take pride in their work and give their best effort.
TRUSTWORTHINESS	People worthy of trust keep promises, fulfill commitments, and abide by an agreement.
LOYALTY	Loyal people consistently demonstrate respect and provide support and commitment based on positive values.
FAIRNESS	Fair people are committed to justice, the equal treatment of individuals, and acceptance of diversity.
CARING	Caring people show concern for the well being of self, others, and the environment. Caring is shown through compassion, generosity, kindness and service.
RESPECT	Respectful people have confidence in their own beliefs and values and acknowledge, understand, and support the rights of others to express their beliefs.
CITIZENSHIP	Citizens contribute to the community (local/global) in active, positive, and creative ways and encourage the participation of others.
RESPONSIBILITY	Responsible individuals know, understand, consider, and accept the impact and consequences of personal decisions and actions. They reflect on the results of their work and apply this new learning to subsequent tasks.
COOPERATION	Cooperative people actively participate with others in sharing information and ideas toward a common goal.

# THE SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION

*What we will look like, feel like, and be like when operating at our ideal best.*

The Sycamore Community School District strives to be a future-focused, dynamic organization. Our vision statements provide a compass to guide our learning community toward the ideal best.

## AREAS OF VISION:

Learning



Curriculum



Instruction



Assessment



Technology



Stakeholders



Personnel



Leadership

## OUR LEARNING VISION

*We believe optimal learning happens when...*

- Educators connect personally with students.
- Students find joy in their learning.
- Learning occurs in authentic ways and in authentic environments.
- Students are involved in the planning of their learning and future.
- Learning is customized to develop their strengths and interests.
- Students are responsible for determining their choices and options.
- Students value their efforts, contributions, and accomplishments.
- Adults value students' efforts, contributions, and accomplishments.
- Students access curriculum through the use of interactive technology.
- Students develop individual learning goals to which they are held accountable.
- Students keep a personal cumulative electronic portfolio.
- Students are provided leadership and mentoring opportunities.
- Students experience diversity.

## OUR CURRICULUM VISION

### *We expect students to learn...*

- A relevant and future focused curriculum.
- A curriculum aligned with exit learner outcomes.
- A developmentally appropriate curriculum that enables teachers to meet the needs of all learners.
- A curriculum developed as a continuous cycle requiring regularly scheduled networking opportunities.
- An interdisciplinary curriculum.
- A curriculum articulated from birth to adulthood.
- A curriculum available to all stakeholders at all times.
- A curriculum allowing all learners to participate in real world situations with community partners related to learner outcomes.
- A world-centered curriculum which provides opportunities to learn second languages.
- A curriculum accessed through a variety of media.
- A curriculum providing opportunities for individualized education.

## OUR INSTRUCTION VISION

*In terms of student learning, we believe...*

- Instruction is not limited by the restraints of time or structure and may be self-directed by learner needs and interests.
- Instruction is supported by the best available research, expert opinions and successful experiences.
- Differentiated instruction minimizes the need for ability-level grouping.
- Instruction is provided in a safe and positive environment encouraging active student engagement and accountability.
- Instruction is driven by an articulated curriculum accessible at all times.
- Instruction motivates students to learn at their individual maximum pace.
- Instruction motivates students to learn individually through current technology.
- Instruction makes use of a variety of relevant support systems which include technology, community, educational agencies and home life to meet established outcomes.
- Instruction focuses on how to learn as well as on what to learn.
- Instruction is presented using a variety of methods: lecture, seminar, shadowing/mentoring, small/large group collaboration, online, and independent study.
- Instructional improvement is a continuous cycle requiring opportunities for collaboration.

## OUR ASSESSMENT VISION

### *To measure success we believe...*

- Assessment is aligned with the district curriculum.
- Assessment is aligned with learner outcomes.
- Assessment is differentiated to meet learners' needs.
- Assessment involves collaboration between students, parents, and staff.
- Assessment is formative and used to drive instruction and student learning.
- Assessment is self-conducted by all staff and students.
- Assessment is both formal and informal.
- Assessment and timely feedback are available online.
- Assessment is available in an electronic portfolio.
- Assessment is evaluated in a continuous cycle.
- Assessment of all programs is a continuous cycle that includes the collection of data from a variety of individual and group sources.

## OUR TECHNOLOGY VISION

*Regarding tools which customize and enhance learning, we believe...*

- Technology enables each learner to develop and be accountable for a dynamic, customized learning plan.
- Anyone can learn anything from anywhere at anytime.
- Access and use of information continues to evolve throughout the expanding learning community.
- Learners use technology to improve competitiveness in the global market.
- The learning community requires access to the appropriate technology to meet the needs of the diverse learner.
- The district curriculum can be accessed online.



## OUR STAKEHOLDER VISION

### *Regarding our community, we believe...*

- All stakeholders understand, articulate, and support the mission.
- All stakeholders understand, articulate, and support the vision.
- All stakeholders desire continuing dialogue that is open, honest and positive.
- All stakeholders desire efficient utilization of resources.
- All stakeholders desire accountability through continuous assessment, periodic review, and renewal of vision.
- All stakeholders expect the pursuit of excellence preparing our students for their future.
- All stakeholders expect that the Sycamore Schools will be “Life-Based,” and that the community serves as a learning laboratory for students.
- All stakeholders expect parents and educators to be mutually supportive and to partner together to provide the best educational opportunities for children.
- Partnerships between local businesses, industries, colleges, universities and District #427 allow students opportunities for real-world learning.

## OUR PERSONNEL VISION

### *Regarding district employees, we believe...*

- The Sycamore School District will utilize staff selection and evaluation processes that align with the district's beliefs and values, mission statement, student outcomes and vision.
- Staff will be highly qualified.
- Sycamore School District will employ staff who enjoy working with children.
- Sycamore School staff are professionals who reflect deeply on their work as individuals and team members.
- Sycamore School staff advance their knowledge and skills within their profession.
- Sycamore School's recruitment/marketing practices reflect the vision of the school district by providing appropriate compensation, enhancement of personal wellness, and meaningful professional growth opportunities.
- District employees are professionals who continuously utilize research-driven best practices to improve the organization.

## OUR LEADERSHIP VISION

### *Regarding the ability of all staff to lead, we believe...*

- Leaders are future-focused visionaries possessing the courage to take risks.
- Leaders clearly and succinctly articulate and communicate the vision to all groups.
- Leaders exhibit, model, and promote the highest standards of integrity, respect, and ethical behavior.
- Leaders demonstrate adaptability and flexibility.
- Leaders consciously and intentionally prepare others for future leadership opportunities.
- Leaders collaborate to ensure district decisions and resources align with the district's strategic design.
- Leaders exhibit strong interpersonal skills and foster strong relationships.
- Leaders promote a safe, secure, trusting learning community which encourages, supports, and welcomes creativity, innovation, and feedback.
- Leaders formulate decisions based upon the district's strategic design.

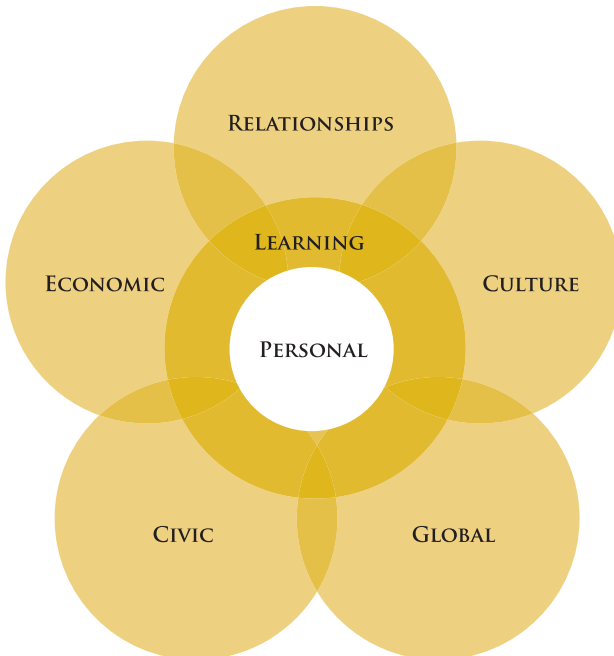
## EXIT LEARNER OUTCOMES IN THE SPHERES OF LIVING

Dynamic changes in the twenty-first century have redefined the expectations for today's student. Exit Learner Outcomes, aligned with our core values, have been systematically identified to support the Sycamore Community School District's Mission – "Empowering All Learners to Succeed in Their World." These outcomes were derived from shifts, trends, and future conditions shaping the world our graduates will face in each of their spheres of living.

*The Exit Learner Outcomes in each sphere are based upon:*

- The mission of Sycamore CUSD #427.
- The future conditions our graduates will encounter.
- The core values we want each of our graduates to embrace.

## SIGNIFICANT SPHERES OF LIVING



## PERSONAL SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

#### **A self-actualizing individual is a person who:**

- Formulates, articulates, defends and applies a personal set of core values.
- Prioritizes work, family, and personal time for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.
- Sets, pursues, and accomplishes personal goals.
- Accepts personal responsibility for his/her decisions.
- Contributes to society and makes decisions with others in mind.
- Manages and budgets time, money, and other resources effectively and responsibly.
- Reflects upon and adapts to change, adversity and successes for continuous self-improvement.



## LEARNING SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

#### **A self-directed, life-long learner is a person who:**

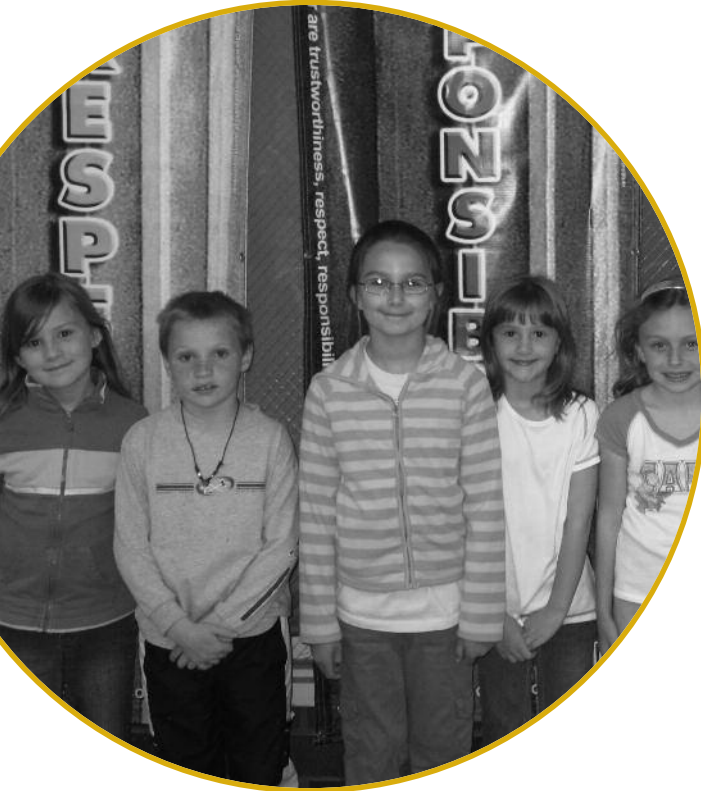
- Acquires, analyzes, organizes, evaluates, and synthesizes information from a variety of sources and applies it to effectively solve problems.
- Writes, speaks, and listens effectively for academic, technical, and personal purposes with a variety of audiences.
- Reads to understand print material, consumer information, electronic media, and literature.
- Utilizes resources to maximize learning anytime, anywhere.
- Researches current trends and issues.
- Transfers information to new situations and communicates new learning to others.
- Seeks opportunities to pursue interests and to enhance learning.
- Creates purposeful learning goals which incorporate risks and challenges of leadership.
- Utilizes reflective practices for personal, intellectual, and social growth.

## RELATIONSHIP SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

**An interactive communicator is a person who:**

- Creates and maintains open, honest, and healthy relationships.
- Values relationships and balances life's commitments.
- Uses effective interpersonal communication skills.
- Listens, encourages and accepts feedback, and continues to build trust.
- Reveals strong decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution to be an effective team member/leader.



## CIVIC SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

#### **A civic minded individual is a person who:**

- Models the core values of the community.
- Actively participates in civic and community service.
- Effectively applies leadership and group process skills.
- Understands and can articulate governmental responsibilities and structures at the community, state, federal and world level.
- Identifies, analyzes, and articulates positions on important issues at all governmental levels.
- Actively seeks to understand and resolve multi-cultural issues.
- Articulates and defends the democratic form of government and capitalistic economic system.
- Is knowledgeable about the history of the United States and can articulate how our past has brought us to where we are today.
- Obeys the laws and, when necessary, works constructively for their change.
- Celebrates our heritage.

## GLOBAL SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

#### **A global citizen is a person who can...**

- Identify and analyze how the competition for global resources has and will continue to determine world events.
- Identify global issues and create responsible, sustainable solutions.
- Develop proactive solutions for the issues faced by the world community.
- Evaluate and synthesize how the impact of history has influenced the current global community.
- Evaluate how a variety of political and economic systems interact in the world of today and tomorrow.
- Determine reliability of information within an ever-changing arena of technology.
- Engage in cross-cultural communication skills.
- Write, listen, analyze, evaluate and speak effectively to global trends and issues.
- Demonstrate tolerance in a diverse global community.
- Analyze and define his/her role in the global community and be flexible in that role.

## CULTURAL SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

#### **A life-long learner is a person who...**

- Recognizes that culture is both deeply rooted in the past, yet ever evolving.
- Analyzes, synthesizes, evaluates and creates cultural messages effectively.
- Acknowledges that culture is influenced by world conditions.
- Participates in his/her cultural community.
- Understands and respects cultural traditions.
- Recognizes cultural achievements.
- Is tolerant and understands various cultures of the world.
- Has an understanding and appreciation of the arts.



## ECONOMIC SPHERE

### *Exit Learner Outcomes*

#### **A quality producer and informed consumer is a person who...**

- Understands the world marketplace.
- Creates, innovates, and contributes to the world market place.
- Demonstrates basic skills and problem-solving abilities to make sound financial decisions.
- Applies and measures quality standards of work.
- Can analyze, develop and defend a business plan.
- Is resourceful in how he/she works.
- Communicates effectively through reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Demonstrates characteristics of a self-motivated, flexible, and self-directed worker.
- Uses resources to mass collaborate.
- Manages and invests financial resources to meet life's needs.
- Conducts himself/herself in an ethical and moral fashion.

## PERSONAL SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- Leaders and individuals will be expected to be future-focused visionaries.
- Our rapidly changing world will provide opportunity for creative and motivated individuals.
- Individuals will be faced with a steady stream of decisions, many impacting moral and ethical considerations.
- America will be even more diverse as will the workplace.
- Competence will be the new capital; knowledge will be power.
- Continuous advances in communication technology will significantly impact our personal life.
- An increased awareness of one's personal responsibility for a healthy, balanced lifestyle will become even more important.
- Personal empowerment will be achieved through identification and development of self-awareness and discipline to overcome obstacles.
- Relationships will become more important as individuals encounter a more competitive and complicated environment beyond self.

## LEARNING SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- A successful personal and professional life will continue to demand authentic life-long learning.
- The world is changing rapidly, and much of what is learned will quickly become obsolete.
- Keeping skills up-to-date will become a greater responsibility of the individual.
- Learning will need to be more flexible and customized by needs and personal choices.
- Technology and the Internet will continue to provide powerful tools for learning.
- Global connections through technology will enable learning.
- The amount of new information available will become more than anyone is able to consume, comprehend, and/or use.
- Analyzing the validity and accuracy of information in all forms or media will become even more critical.

## RELATIONSHIP SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- Time-management skills will continue to be critical to building, maintaining, and sustaining meaningful relationships.
- Demographics of the United States of America are changing; therefore, services and employment opportunities will adapt to fit their needs.
- The anywhere, anytime workplace will provide opportunities for additional relationships.
- Customer is king.
- Collaboration and cooperation will continue to be paramount to success.
- Relationships will allow the individual to be inspired.



## CIVIC SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- Political decision making will require a future-focus.
- Technology will enable individuals to accomplish more both personally and professionally, thus allowing more time to partake in civic responsibilities.
- Technology will continue to be an important component of civic responsibility, providing immediate information access, more resources, and seamless transactions.
- Civic responsibilities should be viewed as both an opportunity and obligation.
- Citizens of varying ages must continue to meet the civic needs of our community.
- In the age of speed, ethics must play a role in civic duties and responsibilities.
- The diversification of our population will create both strengths and conflicts.
- Globalization has created a need to communicate with and work with diverse races, religions and cultures.
- Competent people need to be empowered to produce civic success.
- Our society must continue to balance personal liberties and the need for security.

## GLOBAL SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- Rapid globalization has made our world smaller.
- The world is becoming even more divided between “haves” and “have nots.”
- Technology has “flattened” the world allowing individuals and groups from anywhere to compete globally.
- Terrorism and criminal activity will continue to be factors influencing world leaders.
- Today’s absence of “universal values” will impact tomorrow’s world.
- World population growth will continue to affect both developed and underdeveloped nations.
- Jobs will go where costs are lowest and quality is satisfactory.
- Countries with rapidly growing economies must deal with their pollution problems.
- A global economy exists, and business will continue to be done anywhere at anytime.
- The deteriorating world environment has become a significant issue everywhere.
- English will continue to be the world’s common language.

## CULTURAL SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- Technology has the power to make many cultural experiences available to everyone at anytime.
- Growing technology will continue to diminish the demand for live performances.
- The world's cultural diversity and richness must be embraced.
- Technology and globalization will combine to broaden cultural experiences and expose individuals to the diversity of our world.
- Diversity will continue in America – viewed as a problem by some and a strength by others.
- Technology will dramatically affect people's awareness and knowledge of our world, and will allow cultures to see, share, and learn from one another.
- The United States will continue to be the largest exporter of contemporary culture, often clashing with the values and beliefs of many cultures and religions of the world.

## ECONOMIC SPHERE

### *Future Conditions*

- Customers will continue to have high expectations for customized, high quality products and services.
- Technology will continue to allow a large percentage of business to be transacted from anyplace at anytime.
- Today's high-wage jobs will go to workers with high-level thinking skills, to those who can work with little supervision, and to those who are engaged.
- To be productive and competitive, tomorrow's economy will require empowered people.
- There is little loyalty or job security in today's workplace. Workers must keep their skills sharp and be ready for their next job interview.
- Much "knowledge work" can be done from any location, and reliable workers must be given a great deal of flexibility in their work location and hours.
- Work teams rather than individuals will be required to solve today's complex problems.
- The economy has gone global, creating a good deal of cultural diversity in today's workplace.
- A significant and growing number of people will become "free agents" working for self rather than organization.
- An increased number of women are starting their own businesses and will continue to contribute much to America's job growth.
- The individual must take increased responsibility for financial security.

## STRATEGIC DESIGN COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*October 9, 10, 11, 2008*

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