Chapter 2
Strategic Curriculum Planning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is designed to inform and educate the reader about the strategic curriculum planning as well as various types of curriculum designs and models. The chapter explains what strategic planning is and the various components of the plan, and provides a sample format to follow. The chapter continues with a discussion about three different curriculum designs, subject-focused, learner-focused, and problem-focused, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each. The chapter finishes with a discussion about numerous curriculum models and the school leader's role in strategic planning.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is "the process of setting goals, deciding on actions to achieve those goals and mobilizing the resources needed to take those actions. A strategic plan describes how goals will be achieved through the use of available resources" (Billingham, 2012, para 2).

Strategic planning in education is an organizational technique for schools to use to set and accomplish specific goals and objectives that will increase student academic achievement even while having to adjust to ever-changing school demographics and stay within the budgeting limits imposed by outside funding resources (ECRA Group, 2015). This type of strategic planning differs from a business plan, where the company's goal is to attract more customers and produce a profit. Schools are in the business of educating their youth to produce law-abiding citizens to live and work within society (Billingham, 2012).

Strategic planning for schools can be used to encompass a large picture, such as a plan for growth and improvement over several years, or it can be used on a smaller scale and merely focus on a specific department (ECRA Group, 2015). In this chapter, the focus will be on strategic curriculum planning (SCP) to determine the best fit to cover all the needs of each K-12 student despite learning ability level.

BACKGROUND

The concept of strategic planning began back in the fifth century BC with the Greeks, who used it to develop their city states (ECRA Group, 2015). In the 1920s, the Harvard business model was developed for businesses to use, and 30 years later, in the 1950s, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analyses were used widely by businesses (ECRA Group, 2015). However, with little to no evidence from the scientific community that strategic planning was beneficial, it was abandoned until the 1990s, when it once again became popular (ECRA Group, 2015). At that time, school districts also took up the cause because they were being held more accountable for the academic achievement of their students as well as being held culpable for district finances (ECRA Group, 2015). Schools began "regularly engaging in the process of examining the mission and vision, assessing current state, setting goals, determining action plans to achieve their goals, and measuring progress towards meeting the goals" (ECRA Group, 2015, p. 3).

According to Billingham (2012), the use of a strategic plan to operate schools was a way to get more community members involved. It was also a way to get support from community businesses, lawmakers, and families of the students who were attending the schools. School district administrators and leaders understood that without this collaborative support, their strategic plan would more than likely fail.

Billingham (2012) suggested that there are four essential indicators that must be in place if a school is to have a successful strategic plan:

- All stakeholders must agree to one plan. It may take much negotiating prior to the final plan, but without everyone headed toward the same end goal, there is no plan.

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