



IMPACT Stories

Developing a Strategic Plan for Indiana

The Great Lakes Comprehensive Center at AIR and the Indiana Department of Education developed an agencywide comprehensive strategic plan for improving internal functioning and advancing education in the state.

Project Background

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) leadership recognized that the department needed a comprehensive strategic plan, and staff commitment to its success, to effectively address the education challenges the state faces. In summer 2013, the Indiana superintendent began a conversation with Great Lakes Comprehensive Center (GLCC) about IDOE's goal to build an internal strategic plan. The plan would support the IDOE vision for education in the state, "Imagining the possibilities and making them happen," and its mission, "to build an education system of equity and high quality focused on student centered accountability" (Altman, 2013).

Task and Approach

IDOE requested GLCC support as it designed and implemented a strategic planning process. To help IDOE formulate its approach, GLCC led strategic planning workshops in which every IDOE staff member had the opportunity to participate, and synthesized the workshops' products (objectives, strategies, indicators, and evidence) into a strategic plan document draft. In addition, GLCC provided access to resources, including materials from other state education agencies and comprehensive centers. GLCC continues to serve as a thought partner as IDOE implements the strategic plan.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- » **Building commitment.** Over the course of the year, GLCC worked with all key stakeholders at IDOE to develop an internal commitment to the development and implementation of a strategic plan. This work included fostering relationships across divisions and offices within IDOE; bringing in outside advisors, including the Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity (BSCP); and facilitating leadership development within the IDOE team.
- » **Promoting leadership development.** GLCC facilitated a series of strategic planning sessions in which 28 IDOE leaders wrote value statements and goals for their specific divisions and offices.

“ I believe that this strategic plan is a vital step in building an education system of equity and high quality focused on student-centered accountability. Achieving this mission and vision is not the action of one person, but instead requires the concerted action of a community. This internal strategic plan brings together and aligns the goals and objectives of the IDOE community so that the department can make every imagined possibility happen. ”

Glenda Ritz,
National Board Certified Teacher
Indiana Superintendent
of Public Instruction

- » **Conducting inclusive workshops.** To foster staff buy-in and continuous, active participation in the strategic plan, GLCC designed and delivered, with IDOE’s assistance, a series of workshops that included staff from every department within the agency. These included:
 - ▶ **Planning workshops.** GLCC facilitated 10 full-day workshops in which staff identified objectives, strategies, indicators, and evidence to support the leadership’s vision, mission, and goals. These workshops gave participants an opportunity to align their individual responsibilities within the plan.
 - ▶ **Implementation workshops.** GLCC facilitated implementation workshops in which IDOE staff updated, refined, and advanced their sections of the strategic plan and learned how to make the plan interactive and current.
 - ▶ **Lean Continuous Improvement workshops.** In response to a request from IDOE leadership, GLCC provided the *Lean Continuous Improvement Program* training through Charactership Lean Consulting Inc. to improve efficiencies among divisions that share similar responsibilities.
- » **Drafting the plan.** GLCC led IDOE leadership through the process of refining and prioritizing the results of the workshops. This process supported IDOE’s reprioritization of existing initiatives, realignment of staff, and redistribution of resources to better target its priorities and initiatives.

RESULTS

- » IDOE now has a **functional strategic plan in place** that advances its vision and mission and explicitly identifies the responsibilities of all of its divisions, offices, and employees. IDOE uses the strategic plan to ensure continuous improvement.
- » IDOE made **significant changes in the distribution of resources and responsibilities.** Some divisions were merged, new divisions were created, and some staff titles and responsibilities were revised to improve IDOE efficiency and effectiveness.
- » Through Lean training, participating **IDOE staff gained new skills** in problem solving, collaboration, and team building.

REFERENCE

Altman, D. (2013, August 29). “Viewpoint: Ritz shares her vision for Indiana’s educational system.” *The Herald Bulletin*. Retrieved from http://www.heraldbulletin.com/opinion/viewpoint-ritz-shares-her-vision-for-indiana-s-educational-system/article_8211f0fb-d0bc-57c0-b90a-1ff89adab7e4.html

GREAT LAKES Comprehensive Center

at American Institutes for Research ■

1120 East Diehl Road, Suite 200
Naperville, IL 60563-1486
800-356-2735 or 630-649-6500

www.greatlakes-cc.org