

**“CLASS NOTES” COLUMN FOR COLLIER CITIZEN NEWSPAPER – for 10/23/09**

Having a good business plan is key to success in getting a company, big or small, off the ground. But once you've been up and running for a time, coming up with a good strategic plan will give you a roadmap for the future and take you to the next level. And while strategic planning is a very important business activity, it's also important in the public sector, including the education business. Here at the school district offices, we've begun a long-range strategic planning process – coupled with some healthy community engagement – to guide the work of Collier County's schools for the next two to three years. The result will give us a vision with clear goals, and targeted plans to carry the vision forward as we operate our schools and serve your children, our students. Collaborative Communications Group will guide us through the process. They were the driving force behind The Education Foundation's extremely successful Connect Now community engagement project that we've heard so much about. Community engagement will also be at the heart of the district's strategic planning process.

There will be two phases. The first, a Vision and Goal Setting phase, and a second involving Operational Planning. Phase one will result in a “core statement” clearly spelling out the vision, beliefs and must-have goals for the district. These will drive our work. A planning team of about 30 people will work with the Superintendent and Board Members to do much of the work. You're invited to the first team meeting that will take place at 6 p.m. Monday here at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administrative Center. Then you'll have plenty of opportunity to give us your feedback once a draft of the core statement is ready. The draft will flow from the concepts dealt with in the Connect Now community statement. If you've heard about it but perhaps haven't read it, you might want to take a look. It can be found online on The Education Foundation Web site at [www.educationforcollier.org](http://www.educationforcollier.org) as well as on the school district Web site. So that's phase one. In the second phase, the strategic planning work will define internal operation plans as the community engagement piece shifts into high gear making sure your input is taken into account.

The Superintendent and School Board Members are fully committed to total transparency, and an all-inclusive process to give you the chance to be involved and heard. Community meetings, as they did with Connect Now, will play a big role in the district's strategic planning process.

Do you want to learn more? Want to get involved? Just send an e-mail to [info@collier.k12.fl.us](mailto:info@collier.k12.fl.us), or call us at (239) 377-0180. Or go to the home page of the district Web site – [www.collierschools.com](http://www.collierschools.com).

*By Joe Landon, Communication & Information Officer, School District of Collier County*