**2.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**History**

* Sometime after **1950** the adoption of ‘strategic planning’ in the business world began**.**
* Since **1970,** the education sector amassed a rich history of “community engagements”.
* Since **1980**, Schools in US began adopting the practice of strategic planning.
* Around **1984,** the term appeared in educational publications for the first time.
* By **1987** most of the US schools started adopting the strategic planning.

The education sector has shifted the process of strategic planning from a boardroom activity in business to a community-involved process in education.

**Why do we need strategic planning?**

* ***“Strategos”*** literally means “General of the Army” in Greek. As a General leads the army, similarly strategic planning leads the progress.
* Most of the minority schools, seems to have been grappling with the under par academic performance of their students.
* Regardless of how hard they work, they use to go in circle “LIKE A KOLOO KA BAIL”.
* Failure in drawing a clear roadmap for a higher notch performance might has been the reason.
* Strategic planning is an approach that helps the school to achieve goals to improve students’ performance as well as become a more efficient and effective institution.
* In simplest terms a school undertakes strategic planning to reaffirm or modify its mission.
* The purpose is not to decide what should be done in the future but to decide what should be done now to make desired things happen in an uncertain future.

**What is strategic planning?**

* Strategic planning is the process of setting goals,
* Deciding on actions to achieve those goals,
* Mobilizing the resources needed to take those actions, schools use strategic planning to achieve the broad goals of improving students’ outcome,
* Without community support and the insight that comes with community engagement strategic plans are likely to fail.

**Reason to formulate strategic planning**

*More and more educational institutions are leaned on to plan strategically, due to the following reasons;*

* A school may wish to plan and carry out all the activities deemed needed in a synchronized manner.
* More resources do not necessarily stand for the best results. The way, these resources are being used can lead to different level of benefits.
* It has become more and more difficult to plan everything one would wish to do. One ought to make choices, often tough ones, through a balanced decision making, consensus building processes.

**What is a strategic plan?**

* It is a detailed (approx 3-4 pages) document used to communicate with the institution, its goals, the actions needed to achieve those goals and all of other evaluative elements developed during the planning exercise.
* It can be defined as a set of decisions about what to do, why and how to do?
* As a reference on action, the plan is the result of consensus building process, to be agreed upon by all those working in the field.
* It is designed in such a way as to allow for adjustments in light of new development during implementation.
* It includes not only policy and expenditure framework, but also the ladder of objectives, key actions and institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
* It shows the school’s vision, mission, goals, values and objectives. This gives stakeholders discuss and agree on the same priorities and focus on the same path of improvement.

**Key elements of a strategic plan**

1. **Vision**
2. **Core value**
3. **Clearly defined outcome**
4. **Accountability**

**1) Vision**

* It helps create goals which are cohesive and focused
* Vision is very critical for the progress and development of an Institution.
* Inspire all stake holders; the employees of the school alike whether principal, teachers, students, parents and the supporting staff.
* Unify their efforts towards a common goal; all concerned and stakeholders will unify their efforts towards a common goal, with increased efficiency.
* Creating a vision statement is the obvious starting point for defining the overall vision.

**2) Core Value;**

* A core value is a central belief clearly understood and shared by every member of the school community.
* Pursuing excellence
* Learning through innovation
* Growing by learning
* Strive to develop potential

**3) Clearly defined outcome;**

* A strategic plan is nothing without a set of clearly defined outcomes.
* These are the changes we expect to result from our program.
* These can be the changes in individuals, systems, policies that we seek to achieve.
* Vision, mission, and focus areas are great starting points. But-no-one may take the plan seriously unless it is clearly articulated with the steps desired to be taken for the success. When outcomes are clearly defined it works.

**4) Accountability;**

* This is one of the key elements of a strategic plan
* Lack of accountability will absolutely destroy the intended execution of the strategic plan.
* The real value of strategic planning in a school is more than simply the outcome of having a blue print that guides future leadership decisions.
* It is a powerful and effective way to build consensus and motivate resource support, and is particularly useful in defining priorities for the Board, the head of school and administrative team who are charged with the implementation of the plan.

**Creating a school strategic plan**

* An essential process for the improvement of the whole academic scenario at the school.
* It helps in achieving goals, improve students’ outcome as well as become more effective and efficient Institution in the field of education.

**STEP 1**

**Community involvement**

* A “reference document” that can get everyone on the same page, in unison and undivided,
* The first step in “creating a successful strategic plan” is getting everyone involved to agree on ‘one model of strategic planning’**.**
* Without community support strategic plans are likely to be unsuccessful. Engage early and engage often is the *mantra of successful collaborative management.* Strategic planning is best accomplished with the inclusion of parents, and the technology has enabled this.
* Without the connected and accessible ‘environment’ like the internet, genuine and affordable community engagement, strategic planning would not have been feasible.
* Our connected environment, everywhere availability of e-mail and user friendly technology has changed, and will continue to change the strategic planning process.

**STEP 2**

**Carefully select the members of the planning team.**

***Use two criteria for selection.***

* Make it sure about those who intend to be included can and will contribute positively to the content of the resultant plan.
* Those who are in a position to drive the successful implementation of the strategies are to be included as the members.

**STEP 3**

**Educate the administrators to the strategic-planning process.**

* Make it sure that they all understand the definitions and importance of terms like “missions” and “goals”.
* Also make sure they all understand the critical role they play in both strategy development and implementation.

**STEP 4**

**Involve employees beyond those who are in the planning team.**

* Ask them for help.
* Have their participation in preplanning surveys to “rise- up” issues for discussion at the upcoming strategy sessions.
* Be sure to offer them feedback on the outcome of those sessions. If you forget that feedback, they will feel cheated.

**STEP 5**

**Gather applicable information prior to the strategic session.**

* Have your planning team think through the issues you will likely discuss at your up-coming strategy session/s and decide on the information they will need to deal with those issues and arrive at strategic decisions?
* Then prior to the strategy sessions, gather and share that information among the members of the planning team.

**STEP 6**

**Avoid the interruptions and distractions during the session**

**STEP 7**

**Allow enough time to the strategy sessions.**

* Strategic thinking involves thoughtful discussions. This simply takes time.
* Those who rush, end up with inferior plans.

**STEP 8**

**Encourage open communication.**

* If you are the leader, you will play most difficult role in the process.
* For you will walk the fine line between being an active participant and coming across as “too strong” as the boss, you are in a position of leadership.
* Others will simply hear your voice as a bit more loud than any of the others.
* Tone it down and encourage others to participate.

**STEP 9**

**Communicate your strategy.**

* Once you have developed your strategic plan, let your employees and stake holders know your plan.
* Do not tell them once; tell them over and over again.
* Put it into your communication documents, hold annual progress meetings, involve them in the action plans and annual implementation reviews.

**STEP 10**

**Keep your plan alive.**

* Have your employees develop specific action steps (tactics) to implement your strategy.
* Monitor progress of those action steps at quarterly review meetings.
* Remember it is one thing to develop a strategy, and quite another to implement it.
* This is a real work! You will need to manage it as such.

**STEP 11**

**Link your strategic plan to your budgeting process.**

* As part of your action plan development, estimate the resources required to accomplish all of the action steps; thus to implement the strategy.
* Those resources should include: people, money, facilities and equipment.
* These estimates feed nicely into the budgeting process.
* So, your budgeting cycle should follow your strategy development and your action plan development.
* *Responsibility of execution of the Strategic plan lies with the Head and the Manager of the Institution*

**The school’s academic improvement and moral goals;**

* Increasing students’ Math and English proficiency
* Giving teachers advance training and grooming and support on helping students get mentally and physically ready to learn.
* Increasing focus on daily school attendance.
* Increasing instruction through demonstrations and interactive learning between teachers and students.
* Increasing the number of students scoring higher grades can be achieved by formation of different categories of students and gradual improvement in their individual performance.
* Provide children with an education in a caring and understanding manner within a happy learning environment.
* Treat each child individually in terms of his/her emotional and academic environment.
* Help each child to develop academic and physical skills, knowledge, understanding and appreciation, to the point where he/she can sensitively challenge new experiences.
* Work to maintain high standards with high expectations for both staff and children.
* Encourage each child for the development of mutual respect, sensitivity and caring for others among the pupils, staff and community.
* Seek to develop within each child the wish to learn, the ability to learn for themselves, and the willingness and enthusiasm to try something new.
* Work to foster good relationships and good reputation between the larger community and the school community.
* Staff and the management, both are required to remain committed and active throughout the year for development of academics at school.
* The identified areas for improvement are the curricular areas that are below expectations.
* Ensure teaching is given enough time to different subjects for pupils to make adequate progress in each subject.
* Take steps to improve pupils speaking and listening skills.
* Eliminate the amount of unsatisfactory teaching.
* Improve the quality of provision for religious development, including and ensuring that acts of collective worship are more meaningful and purposeful for the community as well as the Nation.

**Execution of strategic planning**

* There are a variety of approaches to carry out strategic planning. One cannot say that there is a “single perfect way” to conduct it.
* Each institution has its own particular interpretation of the approaches and activities in strategic planning and management.
* However, what is generic to strategic planning and management are certain typical stages involving similar activities carried out in a similar sequence.

**To make strategic planning effort successful, certain pitfalls have to be avoided.**

* The main pitfall of planning is falling into the delusion that planning determines the required outcome. In fact planning cannot guarantee the outcome we want. It can only help us to achieve something integral to any future success.
* Unpreparedness to face the unforeseen challenges.
* Not including key people in the planning effort.
* Planning before undertaking a “situation assessment”.
* Developing a mission statement first.
* Confusing goals and objectives.
* Measuring activity instead of results.
* Jumping straight to strategies after developing objectives.
* Not developing detailed action plan for strategies.
* Not monitoring or revising the plan.

***Education strategy incorporates a vision for teaching and learning as well as the students’ experience at a time of rapid change and complexity.***