



# Sweet Home Central School District of Amherst and Tonawanda

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## **Sweet Home Central School District Board of Education Goals for the 2023-2024 School Year**

At its annual retreat on September 27, 2023, the Sweet Home Board of Education engaged in robust and collaborative discussion regarding its goals and major initiatives for the 2023-2024 school year. The goals discussed at the Board retreat include our work in advocating for and implementing the newly adopted Strategic Plan, developing a scope for the next major capital project, and leading the way in Phase III of Sweet Home's DEI initiative.

### **Goal #1**

*The Board of Education will lead in the promotion, advocacy, and implementation of the newly adopted Sweet Home Strategic Plan. The Board will ensure benchmarks are being reached and that students are developing into the portrait of a Sweet Home graduate, as defined in the plan. The Board will regularly engage in talks with District Office and the community, and lead in the accomplishment of goals around teaching and learning, developing a future focused culture, and ensuring the needs of the whole child are met. Student achievement from an academic, social, and emotional perspective is highlighted throughout the Strategic Plan. The Board is dedicated to enhancing academic performance for every student. It will consistently evaluate the implementation of the plan, plan benchmarks, and end-of-year data to ascertain whether there is a notable improvement in achievement levels for all students.*

### **Rationale**

The Sweet Home Strategic Plan was Board approved in June of 2023. All Board members agreed that the plan will not live on shelf. Instead, the Board made it clear that benchmarks stated in the plan must be met, and that the District move toward and adopt a 21st century learning mentality that is student centered, benefitting all students in the District.

### **Mid-Year Notes**

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**Goal #2**

*The Board of Education will lead in the development and scope of the next major capital project. Recognizing a need at our elementary schools for additional space and functionality to meet the needs of all students, and reviewing all facilities in the District to ensure they meet the goals of our Strategic Plan, the Board will use input from all stakeholder groups to build a scope of the project and begin the process of communication with the community to prepare the District for a public referendum in the Fall of 2025.*

**Rationale**

An increase in enrollment, the evolving needs of our students, real-estate development in the District, additional staff in mental health areas, and the changing landscape of several District neighborhoods have led to spacing concerns, mainly in our elementary buildings. In addition, traditional spaces in elementary schools have been reconfigured to house special needs students, but were not originally built with their needs in mind. Enrollment projections show increases over the next 10 years, and potential development in the Town of Amherst could lead to further increases. Also, 2025 is a year that the District will meet several large debt obligations, meaning the District can accrue debt, more easily manage the tax cap, and keep the impact to tax payers at a minimum.

**Mid-Year Notes**

### **Goal #3**

*The Board of Education is committed to maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational and work environment where all stakeholders have the opportunity to succeed and achieve. Now that a District-Wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has been created, the next phase will be to develop an equity audit process in the District to ensure all students have every opportunity to succeed. Audit procedures will be developed by the District DEI Committee, with the goal of conducting at least one audit of a District function this year by the District-wide committee or a subcommittee.. The District is always open to including more community members on our DEI committees so every student and stakeholder has a sense of belonging and can contribute to the overall success of our District.*

### **Rationale**

Our DEI initiative will move into Phase 3 of our work this year and start to examine all operations of the District to ensure our environment is inclusive and that all students are on equal footing. The District-wide DEI committee will create an auditing process. Results of at least one audit will be presented to the Board of Education at year end.

### **Mid-Year Notes**

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**Goal #4**

*The Board of Education will create a budgetary plan that is inline with our new Strategic Plan and promotes teaching and learning; develops future-focused programming; and serves the needs of the whole child. The plan will be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of the district. The Board recognizes that our economy may shrink in the next 2-5 years and will plan accordingly. The Board will also consider our next major capital improvement project, and plan now to reduce and/or eliminate a tax burden for the project on our taxpayers*

**Rationale**

The District's budget must always support the academic, social, and emotional needs of every student in our District. With that said, the District must plan responsibly as federal stimulus monies as a result of the pandemic are no longer available. Also, now that the District is fully funded in Foundation Aid, major spikes in state aid are unlikely to happen. Our first priority is to the students of the District, and the District must continually monitor its financial footing to meet this priority.

**Mid-Year Notes**