Strategic Areas of Emphasis

Our committee's goal was to narrow down to 6-8 strategic area of emphasis. Any more then that would compromise the group's ability to be effective. So, in an attempt to be somewhat systematic and comprehensive in approaching these areas, the group did some thinking around areas of emphasis for business/service organizations. The basis premise is that we are trying to influence the development and delivery of a service (i.e. education/student learning) to customers (i.e. stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, community).

So given that approach, the group came up with the following strategic areas. To do this, we slotted the ideas (words) that came out of the large group brainstorming on Thursday Mar 15 into organizational areas of emphasis. These were then used as the headings for our strategic areas of emphasis, slotting any new ideas as they come up into one of these areas. The result is below:

Strategic Area	Brainstorming Area from Mar 15
1. Finance	Fundraising
2. Technology	Technology
3. Marketing	Communication
	Public Relations (PR)
	Community Outreach
4. Learning Communities	Teacher Development
	Administrative Development
	Community Involvement
	Parent Training
	Parent Involvement/Volunteers
	Collaborative
5. Learning Environment	Curriculum Articulation
	Facilities
	Safety
	Cultural
	Linguistic Competency
	Global
6. Stakeholder Experience	Seamless
	Inclusive
	Unified
	Equity

Once the group was comfortable with these 6 areas, the next step was to create a definition for each area and articulate the kinds of questions that each area needs to address. The results are below:

1. Finance: *The area of finance for the PLCC encompasses the fundraising and disbursement activities of the organization. Also included in finance is tracking the organizations resources including money, people and facilities.*

Key Questions:
1. What fundraising organizational structure will best support the accomplishment of strategic goals and implementation?
    a. If a foundation is the appropriate structure should the PLCC foundation be supplemental to the individual schools' foundations?
    b. Should the fundraising focus be on funding current operating needs at the schools or building an endowment for the longer-term need, or both?
    c. How do we focus the fundraising efforts of PLCC on community members not currently contributing to the benefit of the schools rather than transferring funding from an existing foundation to PLCC?
    d. How do we go about the initial set up of the fundraising arm and do we need a lawyer for a 501c filing for tax exemption?
2. What policy and procedures need to be created around money?
    a. Who raises it? How is fundraising for the PLCC differentiated from the individual school fundraising? How do we tap into community resources, i.e.: Optimists, Thursday Club other organizations to enhance fundraising abilities?
    b. Who gets it? Is this grants based on "greatest need" or equitable disbursement to individual schools foundations regardless of their current funding status? Define equity in terms of funding school projects – is this meant to "equalize" among the schools or will a committee determine fund disbursement based upon priorities set by the PLCC strategic plan? Who are the decision makers in terms of disbursements?
    c. How do we track the results of funding?
3. What accounting procedures need to be in place to insure financial transparency, good bookkeeping practices, on time and accurate tax filings and cash flow management?
    a. Is a professional accountant required or the best option to manage the type of complexity that might result from this large scale undertaking?
    b. Should the budget and cash flow statements be published on the web consistently? Or how should the finances of the PLCC be communicated to the stakeholders?
4. What kind of oversight plus checks and balances need to be in place to ensure the proper use of resources?

A couple of thoughts:
 It will follow from the mission/vision but is this organization's main function to set the "agenda" for the schools to focus on? The administrative tasks associated with finance

are addressed here but who measures and how are the schools measured against their objectives under the plan. Is finance a supplementary role to allow them to achieve those objectives?

2. Stakeholder Experience: *This is both the rational and emotional image of each Stakeholder group that is created whenever individuals of that group come into contact with or touches any of the schools of the Point Loma Cluster. A "touch" includes things such as 1 to 1 interactions, group interactions, written communications, electronic communications, etc.*

Key Questions:
1. What are the current components that contribute to the cluster's image?
2. What is the current image of the Cluster overall and of the individual schools for each stakeholder group?
 - Is it Seamless?
 - Is it Unified?
 - Is it Inclusive?
 - Is it Equitable?
 - Any other key components?
3. How can we create a better overall stakeholder experience?
4. What programs can we put in place to positively enhance the stakeholder experience?
5. How can we measured and track the stakeholder experience over time to insure a high level of stakeholder satisfaction and be able to take action when it is needed?

3. Technology
Definition: The *Procurement, distribution, use, and upkeep of technology in classrooms, computer labs, and offices.*

Key Questions:
1. How do we ensure equal access to computer/internet access at home and school?
2. How do we ensure classrooms are state of the art? And used effectively?
3. How do we support teachers/administrators in continuing growth and development in effective practices?
Using technology?
4. How do we establish streamlined, cost effective ways of tech support?
5. What are the computer standards/competencies required for each grade level?

4. Learning Environment
Definition: *The seamless articulation of curriculum from grade to grade, elementary school to elementary school, primary level to secondary level, plus the creation of well-maintained, safe facilities that support optimal student learning.*

Key Questions:
1. How do we strengthen what we currently are doing to move our students towards global competency?

2. How do we honor diversity and differentiate instruction based on awareness and understanding to ensure equal access of curriculum to all students?
3. How do we define equal access to curriculum?
4. What is linguistic competency? How do we achieve it?
5. How do we provide a seamless curriculum that articulates throughout all grade levels and schools?
6. How do we ensure consistent curriculum at each grade level elementary school to elementary school?
7. How do we ensure all facilities are well maintained?
Clean, physically safe, physically appealing, and conducive to learning

5. Marketing

Definition - *All tasks associated with the communicating the Vision, Mission and Goals of the PLCC to all community stakeholders. All tasks associated with the Public Relations and 'Selling' of our group to the stakeholders, local businesses, the media and the community at large.*

Key Questions -

1.   How to best sell our group and our schools to parents and community members that are skeptical of our local schools?
2.   How to create a campaign that represents what the group is about and the goals?
3.   Will there be any funds available for expenses such as postage, etc.?
4.   Will communications be funneled through the schools or independently?
5.   Will there be a liaison on the PLCC that communicates with the individual PTA's and/or foundations?

6. Learning Communities

Definition: *The identification and provision of continual, educational growth opportunities of all stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, and community members) in service of improving quality student learning.*

Key Questions:
1. How do we assess what the needs of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members are in order to address their needs?
2. Do we need a committee to keep up to date and on the cutting edge of educational practice?
3. How do we provide opportunities for teachers to continually grow in their practice to improve quality student learning
-Across grade levels?
-Within grade levels?
-Across schools?
-Across content areas and areas of interest?
4. How do we provide opportunities for administrators to continually grow in their practice to improve quality student learning

-Across grade levels?
-Within grade levels?
-Across schools?
-Across content areas and areas of interest?
5. How do we provide opportunities for teachers to share/teach other teachers in their area of expertise?
6. How do we provide opportunities for administrators to share/teach other administrators in their area of expertise?
7. How do we fund/pool resources to bring in experts to further teacher education?
8. How do we communicate to community activities and opportunities to be involved in all schools?
9. How do we provide opportunities and training to all parents so that they feel comfortable and are knowledgeable in service of improved student learning?
10. How do parents, teachers, administrators, and community members collaborate to provide quality training to all stakeholders?