

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**Department of Financial Services**  
**Employee and Retiree Service Center**  
*October 2, 2014*

The strategic plan for the Department of Financial Services—Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC), like the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) strategic planning framework and the Office of the Chief Operating Officer strategic plan, emphasizes our commitment to MCPS retirees, employees, and students. Outstanding staff, organizational effectiveness, and exceptional student performance are the key elements of MCPS success. ERSC, as part of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, is committed to a culture of collaboration, service, innovation, and equity. We, along with the rest of the school system, are building our future together. ERSC serves staff to enable them to focus on student learning, with the confidence that their pay, benefits, leave, and other personal business is accurate, timely, and secure. In addition, we serve retirees in recognition of their past service to students.

In order to meet the needs of MCPS employees, we recognize the importance of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, ERSC commits to—

- providing the highest quality business operations that are essential for staff to have in order to ensure the educational success of all students;
- engaging collaboratively and respectfully with all partners, building a self-renewing learning community that reflects our values;
- organizing and optimizing resources, including effective use of technology and sustainable practices;
- establishing strategic processes for operational excellence, customer service, and shared accountability that support teaching and learning;
- hiring for excellence and building capacity of all staff; and
- promoting effective two-way communication.

### **THEORY OF ACTION**

If ERSC cultivates a collaborative culture of service to understand and anticipate needs; communicate processes and the rationale for decisions; and ensure high quality services are accurate, timely, and reliable; then principals, all other staff, retirees, schools, and offices will have the appropriate resources and supports to accomplish their mission.

### **OUR CORE VALUES**

The following ERSC core values are aligned with the MCPS Strategic Plan:

#### **Learning**

*We believe* our focus on serving employees will enable them to focus on their roles in the success of all students. As a result, learning is accomplished through creativity, innovation, focus, and hard work. Lifelong learning for adults is essential to success of students.

*Therefore*, we will model our commitment to achieve continuous improvement, foster professional learning communities that develop a high-performing workforce, and provide professional growth opportunities and support for all employees.

## **Relationships**

*We believe* that meaningful collaboration and partnerships with staff, retirees, and community is a vital ingredient of our success. Stakeholder relationships make ERSC more effective and help others fulfill their missions.

*Therefore*, we will know and seek to understand the perspectives, experiences, and needs of our customers; build strong, mutually supportive relationships with the employees, retirees, schools, departments, divisions, or offices we serve, as well as the vendors we work with; and use interest-based and other collaborative methods, as well as open and honest communication to identify and achieve mutually agreed upon goals.

## **Respect**

*We believe* that respectful behavior generates trust that leads to excellence and high productivity. Each staff member contributes and adds value to the quality of our services. As a result, it is imperative that each member of ERSC, as well as each individual we serve, be treated with integrity, honesty, confidentiality, and respect.

*Therefore*, we will model civility in all interactions and encourage open and honest communications, provide opportunities for stakeholders to voice their opinions, recognize individuals' contributions and progress, and approach others with the belief that they have positive intentions.

## **Excellence**

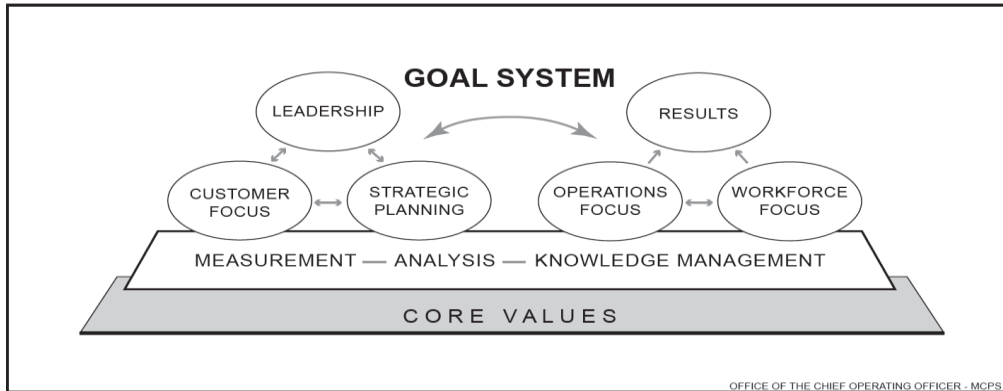
*We believe* that the success of our schools and students depends on setting and maintaining high standards for the work we do. High-quality services are foundational to this success and are dependent upon actively engaged employees.

*Therefore*, we will use resources effectively and efficiently to meet and exceed standards. We will be accountable for our actions and for those of our colleagues. We will measure performance, and strive for continuous improvement. Our commitment to excellence also depends on our innovation with respect to new products, practices, and solutions.

## **Equity**

*We believe* that every person adds value. The racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our organization provides a wealth of perspectives. We recognize that racial and cultural barriers exist and must be acknowledged, confronted, and eliminated.

*Therefore*, in order to recognize customers and colleagues as individuals, we will search for multiple perspectives and relationships from within and outside the organization. We will proactively seek data and practices to identify racial and cultural inequities and work on eliminating them, thereby creating growth and advancement opportunities that benefit all employees.



**GOALS and PROCESSES**

The work for ERSC is grouped using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: leadership, customer focus, strategic planning, operational focus, workforce focus, and results.

**Leadership**

1. The ERSC leadership team focuses on ways to ensure our core values are deployed throughout our operations.
2. The ERSC leadership team uses opportunities in work groups, projects, and negotiating teams to advocate for and consider the impact of changes to processes and practices on ERSC staff. The ERSC leadership team provides direction, establishes priorities, works collaboratively, and models behaviors aligned with our core values. The leadership team builds understanding of the “big picture,” and aligns units’ efforts to support system goals.
3. The ERSC leadership team functions as a professional learning community (PLC) and seeks to build upon practices that are working well and explore alternative ways to conduct our business. This is accomplished by creating an organizational environment that—
  - demonstrates agility and strategic planning and management to meet current needs and prepare for the future;
  - promotes employee engagement and learning, and invests in the development of leaders; and
  - demonstrates ethical behavior and compliance with regulatory and legal requirements.

*Results:*

- As measured by the development, implementation, and evaluation of our action plans and related performance measures
- As measured by the Gallup Survey of engagement

**Strategic Planning**

1. ERSC has a strategic plan that—
  - aligns with the OCOO strategic plan core values and goals;
  - monitors and aligns key processes to track improvement and effectiveness;
  - includes action plans with targets and timelines, typically covering a three year period;
  - includes performance measures that are monitored on a cyclical basis; and
  - promotes equitable practices.

*Results:*

- As measured by our performance metrics that are tied to strategic plan goals
- As measured by the implementation of action plans related to workforce equitable practices

**Customer Focus**

1. All ERSC staff understands and anticipates customer needs and provides high quality services that focus on supporting all staff and retirees, as well as schools and offices.
2. ERSC staff communicates processes and the rationale for decisions to ensure customers and stakeholders understand how needs can be met.
3. ERSC staff utilizes the “voice of the customer” to determine if needs are met in an accurate, timely, and reliable manner.
4. ERSC staff focuses on consistent application of policies and practices to foster equity for all customers.

*Results:*

- As measured by complaint management systems, surveys, and other performance measures.

**Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

1. High-quality integrated information systems and self-service sites are in place to help manage information, improve work efficiencies, and support unit operations.
2. Appropriate data (trend, comparison, and benchmark) are accessible to support data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement.
3. Data are properly managed to assure integrity, timeliness, reliability, security, accuracy, and confidentiality.

*Results:*

- As measured by the management and analysis of data in support of ERSC goals and strategies
- As measured by the sharing of best practices that focus on continuous improvement and innovations

**Workforce Focus**

1. ERSC recruits, hires, promotes, and retains the highest quality employees, providing training and development opportunities that support MCPS’ mission and core values.
2. All tenets of the Professional Growth Systems are in place to strengthen the capability and capacity of the workforce, including training, mentoring, coaching, and leadership development.
3. Professional Learning Communities are used to build the capacity of staff working and learning together.
4. ERSC promotes the appreciation of diversity and equitable practices in the workplace.
5. ERSC staff foster a culture of respect where employee achievements and contributions are recognized.
6. ERSC staff foster maximum appropriate involvement and a culture of respect as embodied by the Pillars, which staff wrote and adopted. As such, ERSC employees are highly engaged, morale is high, team spirit is evident, and job satisfaction is present.
7. ERSC promotes the social, emotional, and physical well-being of staff.

*Results:*

- As measured by workforce data, including new hire, promotion, and equity (includes diversity data)

- As measured by the Gallup Engagement Survey and other employee survey results
- As measured by trends in staff attendance, retention, and turnover

### **Operational Focus**

1. ERSC collaborates to foster a culture of innovation.
2. ERSC uses systematic approaches to improve processes and operational performance and to promote innovations.
3. Process management and improvement decisions are driven by data and analysis of customer and stakeholder feedback.

### *Results:*

- As measured by documentation of unit processes
- As measured by process improvement and innovations

### **ERSC Strategies**

- Integrate equity action plans as part of our hiring and professional growth practices.
- Use Study Circles experience to create a racial equity lens for our work and to develop the skills to lead for equity.
- Use an established quality management system for continuous improvement.
- Implement action plans.
- Use proactive communications, customer feedback, and employee self-service to provide critical and timely information to employees and retirees as needed.
- Use systems including employee self-service to enhance effectiveness, ease of use, and accuracy of processes.
- Continue to seek opportunities for cost-effective employee and retiree benefit and defined contribution plans.
- Develop a range of approaches to promote employee engagement using Gallup survey results.