



SMITHVILLE



School District

FUTURE OF LEARNING IN SMITHVILLE

THINK-TANK REPORT

SMITHVILLE, MISSOURI, USA

DECEMBER 2022





SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

THINK-TANK REPORT SMITHVILLE, MISSOURI, USA DECEMBER 2022

This report summarizes the outcomes of the Smithville School District's Future of Learning Think-Tank held on November 17 & 18, 2022. Approximately 50 stakeholders including Teachers, Administrators, Students, Residents, and Board Members participated in the Think-Tank and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of the Smithville School District strategic planning project which aims to provide comprehensive direction that will guide decision-making for school years 2023-2024 through 2028-2029.

This report and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

<https://lab2.future-iq.com/smithville-school-district/>

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School District





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FOREWORD

The Intentions of the Smithville School District strategic planning process were developed by Smithville School Board Members to help explain to the community what the process is intended to do. The intentions of the strategic planning process include:



STUDENTS

Create a common and future-oriented vision for the Smithville School District 'Portrait of a Graduate', by:

- Further developing the school district's ability to adapt to meet the future needs of students.
- Building on the school district's commitment to real-world-learning for Smithville students.
- Exploring the school district's future role and capacity to expand into early childhood and lifelong learning.

STAKEHOLDERS

Strengthen the collaborative framework between the Smithville School District and its key stakeholders, by:

- Proactively seeking parent, community and stakeholder input on future aspirations for the district, including student outcomes.
- Working with the community and parents, identifying the future needs of the school district.

SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Create a roadmap to move the Smithville School District from a great school system to the premier school system of choice, by:

- Building the school district's reputation as a premier employer by creating an appealing and enticing career environment for teachers and staff.
- Increasing the school district's ability to demonstrate achievement and progress using metric-based evaluation.
- Proactively plan to identify and meet the expected community growth.

Please join with us to produce a strategic roadmap to the future that will guide our school district for the next five years. Thank you very much for your participation in this important endeavor.



SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

Jeff Bloemker	Denney Fales	Ian Saxton
Whitney Carlile	Scott Jacoby	Susan Whitacre
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1.0 | HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report lays out the preliminary findings from Community Survey and the Think-Tank scenario planning process. It also highlights some of the macro trends that are impacting communities and school districts nationwide. Additional details about the project can be viewed at the Smithville School District project portal at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/smithville-school-district/>.

The overall visioning and strategic planning process for this project began with background exploration and analysis, through to building a range of future possible directions for the Smithville School District. This work represents robust 'future thinking' where stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process until now, including this report, then drills down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future for the school district. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for determining 'how we get there.' The final strategic action plan for the school district will be presented to the School Board in May 2023, after a series of Working Group Sessions and Focus Groups that will create the Portrait of a Graduate and build out the Strategic Pillars of the Strategic Action Plan in early 2023.

As we look to the grand challenges ahead, the importance of collaboration, equity, trust, and planning for the future have been highlighted as critically important to building resiliency for the Smithville School District.

SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Steps in the process



Sections of the report



2.0 | INTRODUCTION

Smithville is a first-ring suburb to the north of Kansas City, Missouri. The city is considered a growing residential community with a top-notch school district, and a population of 10,552 (2021 Census).

The Smithville School District has embarked on a nine-month strategic planning process that will continue through May 2023. The intention of the process is to bring together students, community members and staff through extensive engagement to identify Smithville's 'Portrait of a Graduate' and vision for the future of the Smithville School District. The Smithville School District's strategic action planning project will produce a five-year Strategic Action Plan that will provide comprehensive direction for school years 2023-2024 through 2028-2029.

This scenario-based Think-Tank report summarizes the Smithville School District's strategic visioning workshop that took place on November 17 and 18, 2022. The Think-Tank is a key step in the school district's strategic planning process. The components of the visioning work thus far are comprised of:

The Smithville School District Future of Learning Think-Tank was an opportunity for school district stakeholders to take a 'deep dive' into strategic visioning through an inclusive and transparent scenario-planning process.



BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Extensive background research was conducted prior to the Community Survey and the Think-Tank. This included orientation sessions with the acting Superintendent, leadership team, and School Board members.



SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY SURVEY

An extensive survey was completed by 360 Smithville school district stakeholders. The survey aimed to understand stakeholder perspectives on current trends in the school district, as well as their aspirations for the future.



SCENARIO-BASED THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The in-person scenario-based Think-Tank workshop held on November 17 and 18, 2022, provided an important opportunity to engage approximately 50 Smithville School District stakeholders in a critical dialogue about the future and the impacts of changing dynamics in the school district.



THINK-TANK PARTICIPANT HEATMAPS

Think-Tank participants completed heatmaps at the end of the Think-Tank to express their Least Desired, Expected, and Preferred future scenarios looking out to 2030. The results are examined in this report.



WORKING GROUPS

At the Think-Tank, volunteers were requested to help synthesize the accumulated data on the Portrait of a Graduate and strategy development. These two Working Groups will meet in December and January to prepare for the Strategic Pillar Focus Groups that will take place in February.

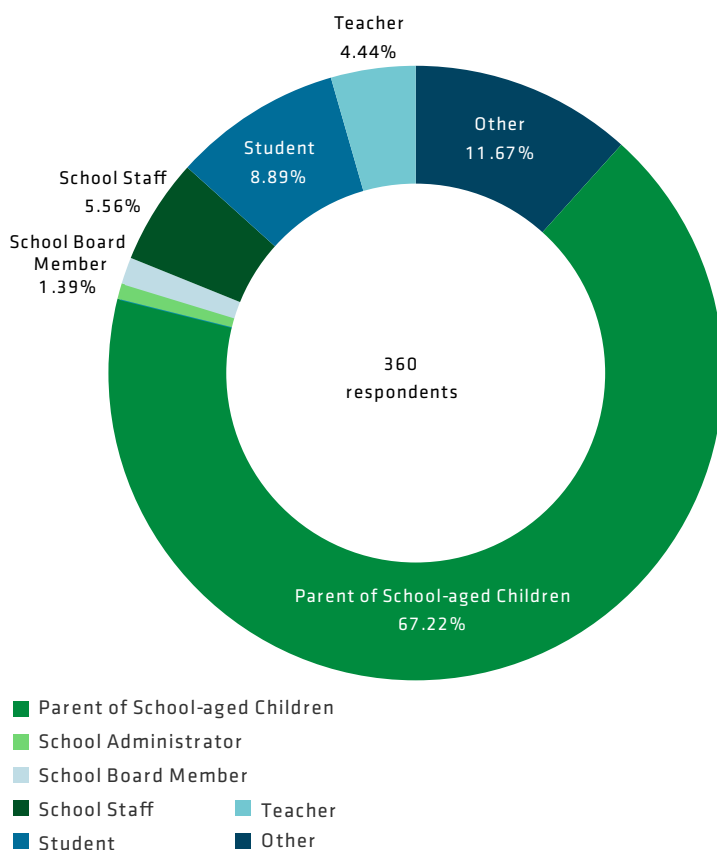
3.0 | COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Prior to the Think-Tank, a community survey was conducted to gather insight into the community's perceptions of trends influencing the school district, including the most significant perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the Smithville School District. At least 360 community stakeholders responded to the survey. Below are some of the compiled results of the survey. The final results will be posted on the project portal at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/smithville-school-district/>.

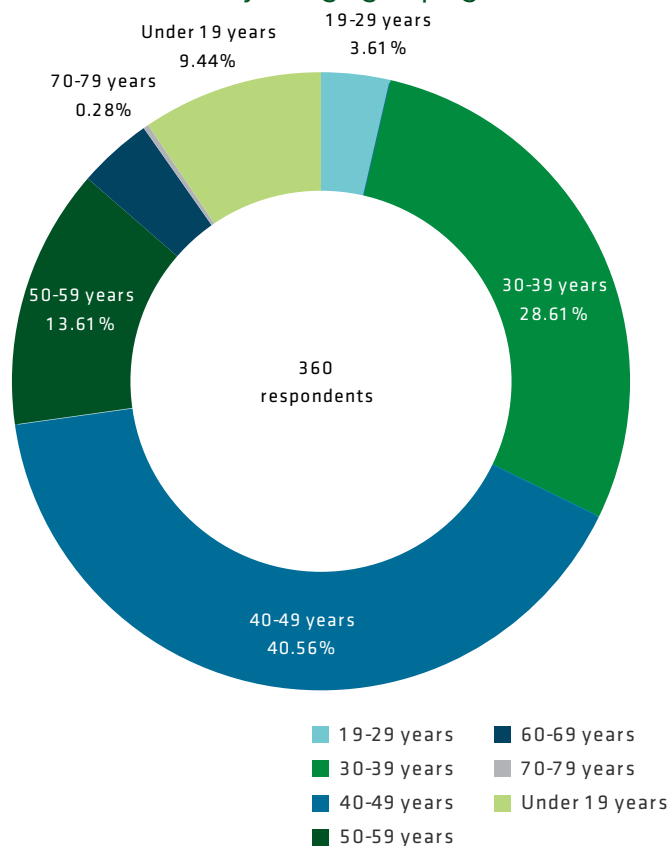
3.1 | PROFILE INFORMATION

Respondent profile information is available on the project portal and includes information such as age, race, how long a resident or worker in Smithville, group affiliation, and which part of the school district the respondent lives in. Two aspects highlighted at the Think-Tank centered around school district affiliation and age.

What is your affiliation with the Smithville School District?



What is your age grouping?



DataInsight

- The majority of survey respondents were parents of school age students (67%). The planning process has made a concerted effort to include students (9%), teachers (5%), school staff (6%), School Administrator (1%), and School Board Members (1%). Many of the 'Other' category were members of two or more groups.
- It was noted that 9% of the respondents were under the age of 19. Think-Tank participants discussed the importance of including the youth voice in the strategic planning process for the school district.



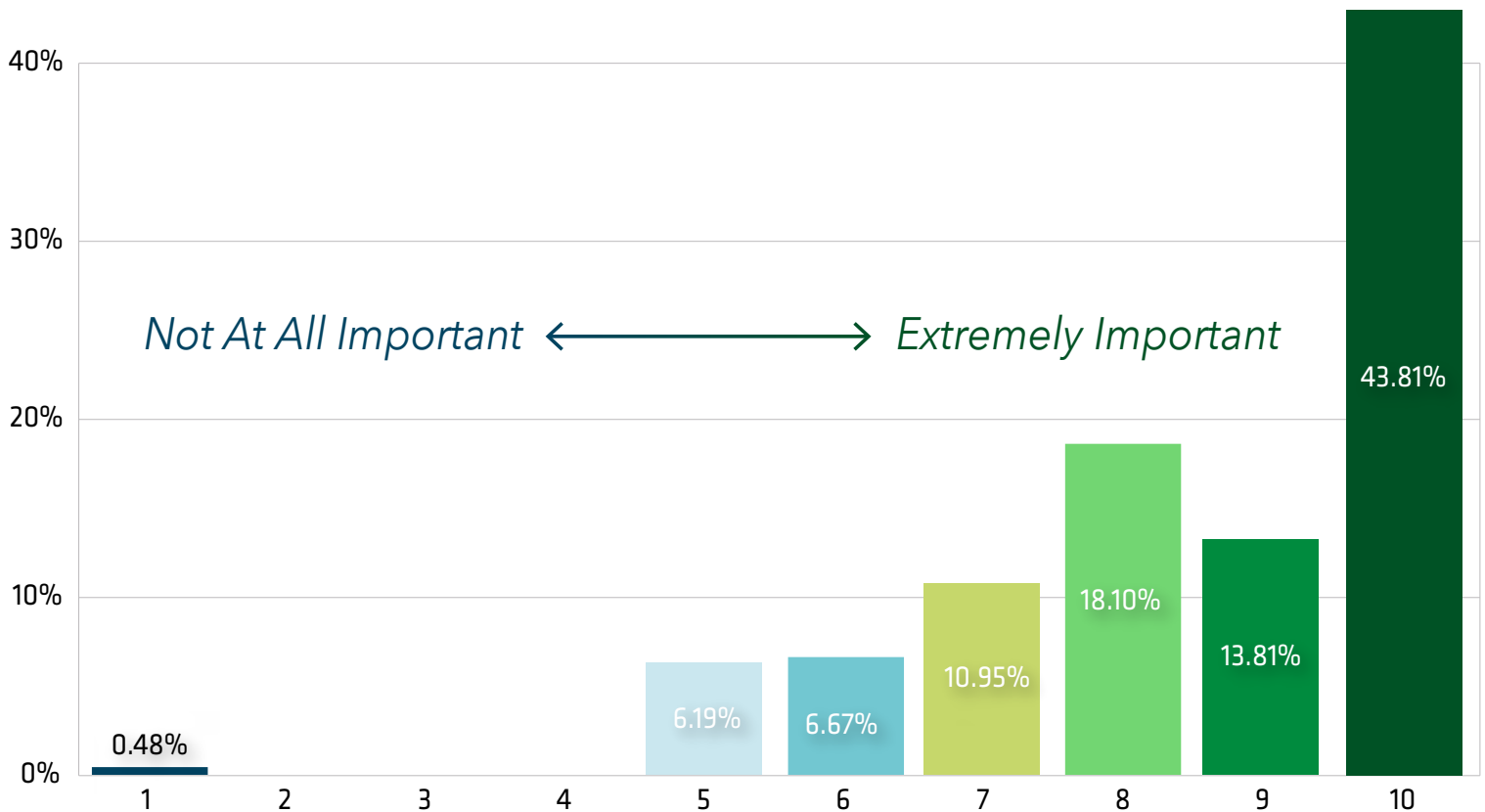
A shared vision for the future of the Smithville School District was identified as important to the majority of survey respondents. Coming together around a shared vision will require deliberate collaboration and transparent communications between the school district and community stakeholders.

3.2 | IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED VISION

Survey respondents were asked to respond to a question about the importance of having a shared vision for the future of the Smithville School District. The vast majority considered having a shared vision important for the future of the Smithville School District.

How important is it to have a SHARED VISION for the future of the Smithville School District?

Scale 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Extremely important



DataInsight

- Most survey responses were in the 7-10 range, indicating that the importance of a shared vision is a unifying factor for the community.
- Applying the shared vision will require regular check-ins with the School District's Board, parents, and community stakeholders to be sure to maintain an aligned approach to decision-making in the future.

3.3 | FUTURE LEARNING AND WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR GRADUATES

Survey respondents were asked about how challenging the future learning and work environments will be for Smithville students and graduates. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

Future Learning Environment

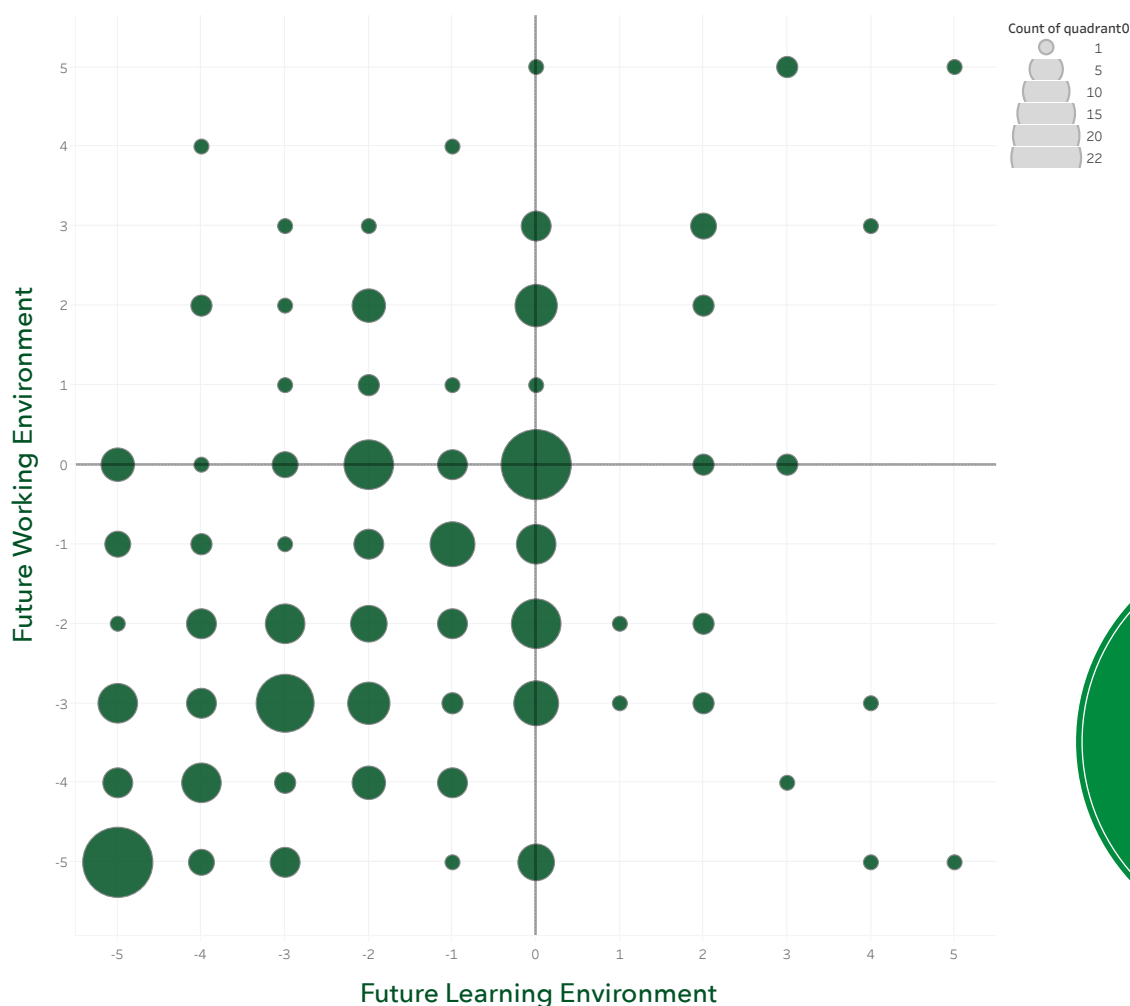
When thinking about the future educational environment for students, do you think the learning environment will be more challenging or easier?

Scale: -5 = Much more challenging; 0 = About the same; +5 = Much easier

Future Working Environment

When thinking about the future work environment that graduates will face, do you think the environment will be more challenging or easier?

Scale: -5 = Much more challenging; 0 = About the same; +5 = Much easier



“The workplace is constantly changing at an ever increasing rate. No such thing as job security anymore. Flexibility and adaptability will be key.”
-Community Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the frequency of the response. This chart shows that the majority of respondents think that both the educational and work environments will be more challenging for students and graduates in the future.
- Anticipating that educational and work environments will be more challenging for students and graduates in the future, the strategic planning process will need to tease out those strategies that will enable students and graduates to tackle these environments successfully.

3.4 | PARENT – SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION AND TRUST

Survey respondents were asked about the nature of the collaborative partnership and trust between the School District and parents. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

Collaborative Partnership with Parents

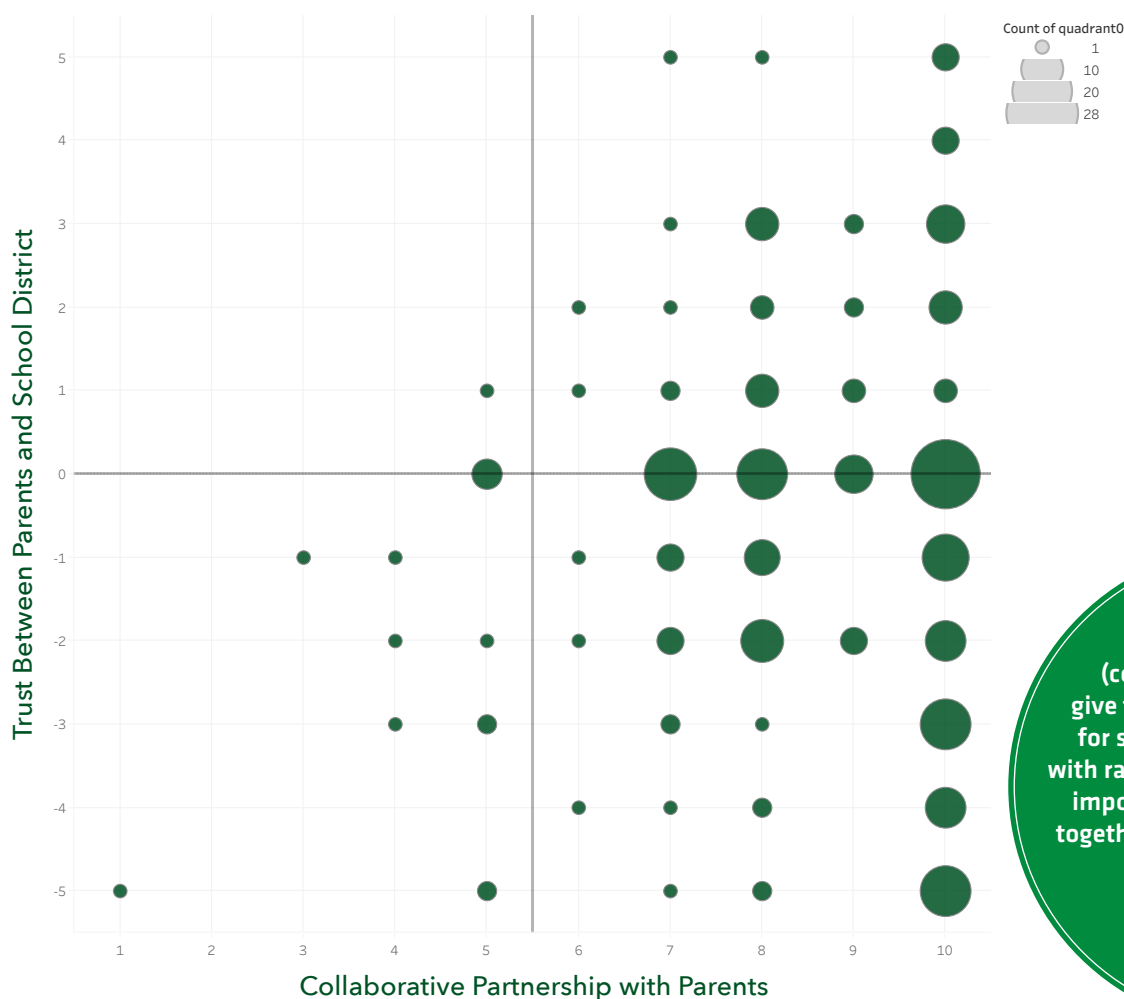
There is a desire to build a strong collaborative partnership between the School District and parents. How important is it for the School District to invest time and effort in building strong collaborative relationships and partnerships with parents?

Scale: 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Critically important

Trust Between Parents and School District

Trust between parents and School District is critical. How do you think this trust relationship is changing?

Scale: -5 Trust levels are declining; 0 = Staying the same; +5 = Trust levels are improving



“You have to have this (collaboration and trust) to give the student the best chance for success. It obviously differs with ranging age groups but it’s very important for all parties to work together with clear communication and expectations.”
-Community Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the frequency of the response. This graph shows that survey respondents consider building collaborative relationships and partnerships between the School District and parents is very to critically important.
- At the same time that building collaborative relationships is considered important, survey respondents were not as confident about the trust relationship between parents and the School District. This is an area that will require additional study throughout the strategic planning process.

3.5 | COMMUNITY - SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS AND RESPECT

Survey respondents were asked about the nature of the collaborative relationships and partnerships between the School District and the community, as well as the level of respect for the role of education and teachers in the community. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

Collaborative Partnership with Smithville Community

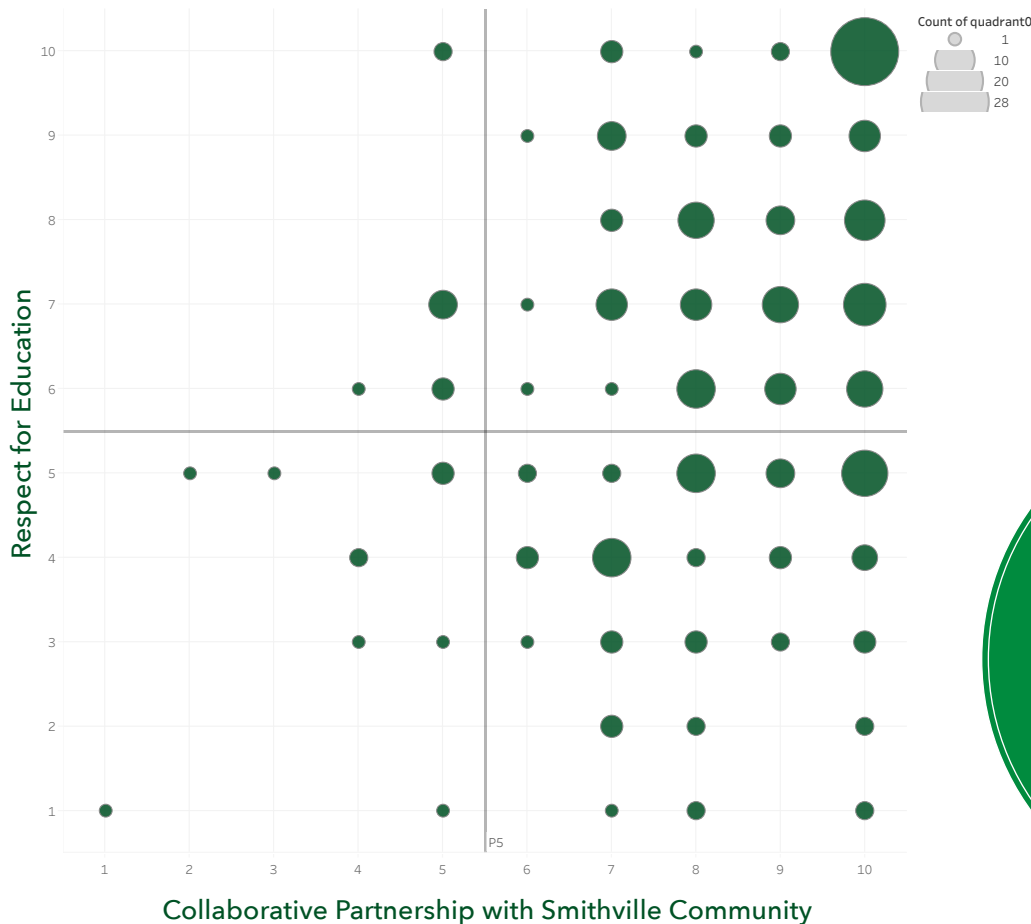
The success of a community is usually considered to be intricately tied to the success of the public school system. How important is it for the School District to invest time and effort in building strong collaborative relationships and partnerships with the Smithville community (including the City)?

Scale: 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Critically important

Respect for Education

Looking ahead to an anticipated shortage of teachers across the country, the School District will need to compete for the high quality of teachers that currently exists in Smithville. Do you think that the role of education and teachers is sufficiently valued and respected in the Smithville community?

Scale: 1 = Not valued or respected; 10 = Highly valued and respected



“Both the school and City function using tax dollars. It is key that the public school system and the City work together to better the Smithville Community. As a smaller community, sharing resources, having master plans aligned, and working together on infrastructure can only be a positive.”
-Community Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the frequency of the response. 87% of respondents rated the importance of building strong collaborative relationships and partnerships in the 7-10 range.
- Where over 62% of survey respondents consider the role of education and teachers respected in the community, 37% indicated that respect for education and teachers was in the 1-5 range. Considering the SWOT analysis results, teachers play a key element in the future of the Smithville School District trajectory.

3.6 | SCHOOL DISTRICT TRAJECTORY, FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

Survey respondents were asked about the importance of pursuing excellence for the Smithville School District and whether funding and investment in the school district is sufficient to achieve desired student outcomes. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

Pursuit of Excellence

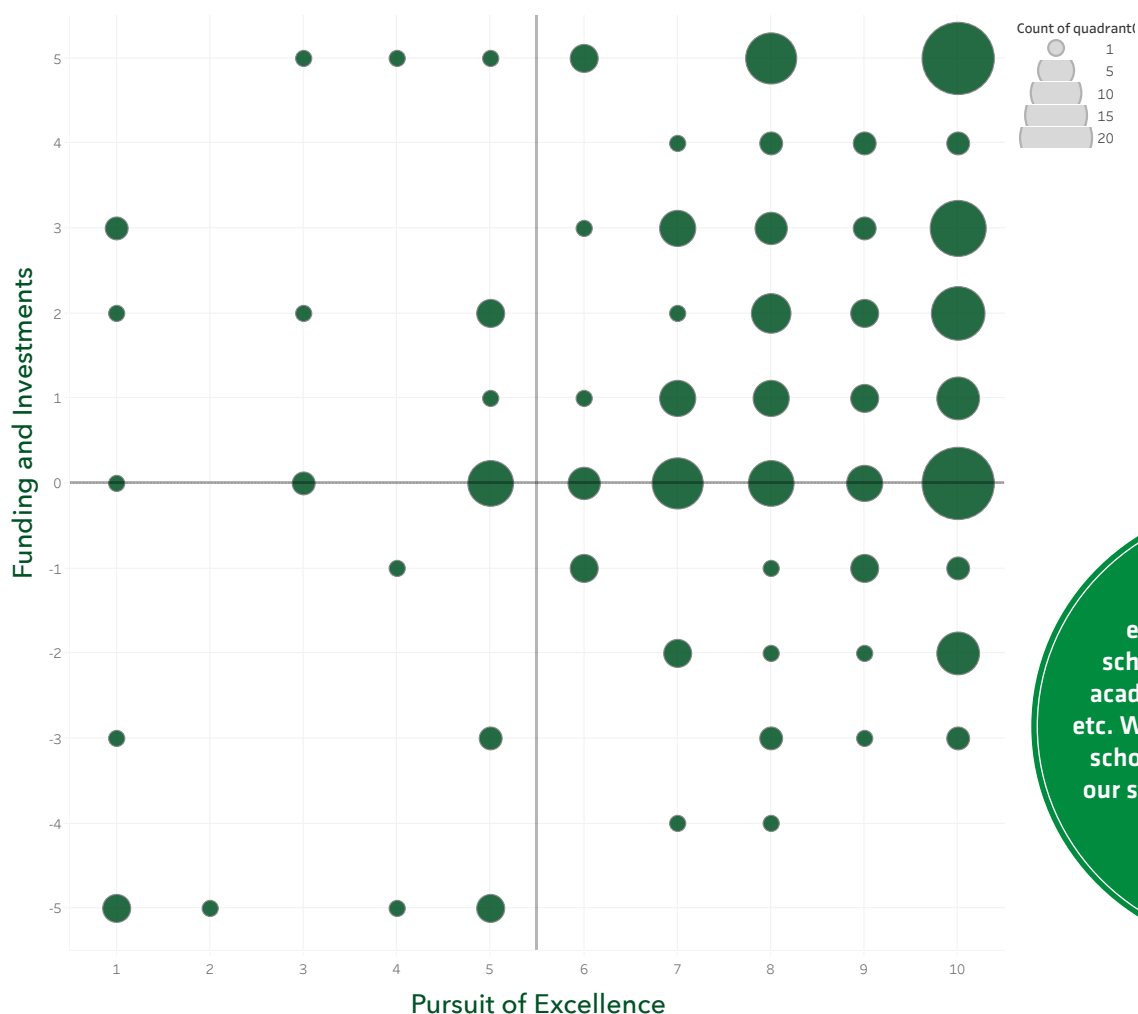
There seems to be interest in helping to move the Smithville School District from a great school system to be the premier or elite performing school system as it boosts the student outcomes and improves the competitive position of the School District and the community. How important do you think it is for the Smithville School District to pursue continuous improvement towards being a premier school system?

Scale: 1 = Not at all important; 10 = Critically important

Funding and Investments

Sustaining high quality education is competitive and costs money. In addition, the community is growing, and the future needs are expected to be higher. Considering this competitive landscape, do you think the Smithville School District current has the funding and investment levels (spending) to achieve and deliver the student outcomes we desire?

Scale: - 5 = We are spending too much; 0 = Just right; +5 = We need to invest more



"We need to become elite in all aspects of the school system. This includes academics, band, choir, sports, etc. We have to be a well-rounded school district in order to serve our students and move to elite."
-Community Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the frequency of the response. The largest circle was at the top of the y axis for the pursuit of continuous improvement towards being a premier school system, and two cells beyond the midpoint of the x axis. This signals that the majority of respondents feel strongly about the importance of becoming a premier school system, and are also more inclined to increase funding levels to do so.

3.7 | BUILDING CAPACITY AND RETENTION OF EDUCATIONAL TALENT

Survey respondents were asked about the school district's capacity to adapt to today's changing world and how well the district is doing to attract and retain the required quality of staff and teachers. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

Building Capacity & Capability

To be an innovative and successful School District, it is important to have sufficient capacity and capability to continue to evolve and adapt to changing needs. Do you think the Smithville School District currently has sufficient capacity/capability to adapt and succeed in today's rapidly changing world?

Scale: -5 = We lack capability; 0 = Just right; +5 = More than enough capability



Attracting and Retaining Educational Talents

Maintaining and improving performance will require having the right talent in terms of teachers and School District personnel. How well do you think we are currently doing in attracting and retaining the required quality of staff and teachers?

Scale: -5 = We are falling behind; 0 = Just right; +5 = We are doing very well



"Public schools are under attack from many sides. Teachers are not paid nearly enough and have incredible expectations placed on them. We need to adequately compensate our teachers so we can retain the good ones instead of losing them to other school districts or careers."
-Community Survey Respondent



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of the response. Where 26% of survey respondents consider the School District's capacity to succeed just right, more people viewed the district as lacking capability than having more than enough.
- The lean towards lack of capacity coincides with survey results showing that respondents also think the district is falling behind in attracting and retaining quality staff and teachers. These two issues will need to be addressed in the strategic planning process if the district is to move forward on its trajectory to the preferred future.

3.8 | SWOT ANALYSIS

As part of the Smithville School District's strategic planning process, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted through the Community Survey. The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that ensures a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of an organization's capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies an organization's competitive advantages—those indigenous assets that make the organization special or competitive in the national and global economies—juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep an organization from realizing its potential. (EDA, 090820) Below are the top 7-10 topics for each SWOT category in order of importance as identified by Community Survey respondents.

STRENGTHS

- Teacher and staff quality
- Community support
- Small town feel/size
- Student options/programs
- Sports program
- Student quality
- Small classroom size
- Supportive parents
- Nice facilities
- Good leadership

WEAKNESSES

- Teacher pay and retention
- Lack of funding and resources
- Lack of diversity and intolerance
- Ability to handle growth
- Bullying and behavioral issues
- Small town status quo
- Focus on sports
- Communication
- Qualified teachers
- Transportation

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth - community and district
- Investment in teachers and facilities
- Sports and athletics
- Community and business partnerships
- META and outside funding
- New technologies
- Real World Learning initiative

THREATS

- School and population growth
- Low teacher pay and retention
- Lack of funding
- Parental influence/demands
- Politics and ideology
- Bullying and behavioral issues
- School safety and security



DataInsight

- Topics or issues that are both opportunities and threats have the potential to propel future trajectory in one direction or another. The school district, community, parents, and students will need to deal with those issues openly and collaboratively to determine the direction of the trajectory.
- It is evident by the Community Survey data that Teachers play a critical role in the future of the Smithville School District.



Scenario planning provides a way to explore various plausible futures and consider the implications and consequences of different future pathways. This adds a richness and depth to the discussions about preferred future, and a consideration of the intended and unintended consequences.

4.0 | THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The Smithville School District Future of Learning Think-Tank Workshop was conducted on November 17 and 18, 2022, at the Smithville Community Worship Center. The workshop explored how the Smithville School District could evolve by 2030 and consisted of:

- A review of global trends and the impact of these trends on the Smithville School District
- Assessment of the school district's strengths and weaknesses
- Formulation of the different plausible scenario 'spaces' and development of detailed narratives and descriptions of each scenario
- Examination of the impact and consequences of each scenario on various aspects of future graduates and the school district
- Identification of the preferred future and potential critical action steps to achieve the preferred future



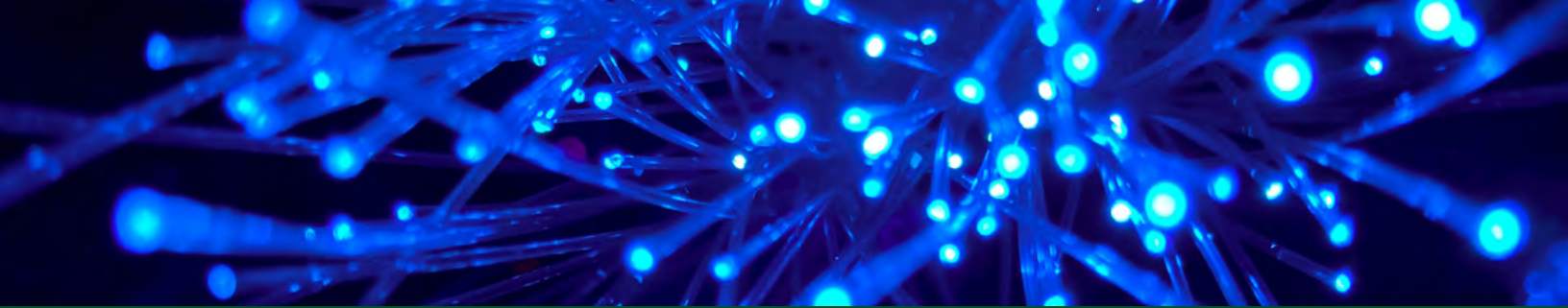
The Think-Tank began with an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions before moving on to conduct scenario planning for the Smithville School District. Future iQ's scenario planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and takes into consideration the implications of various future scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape the school district looking out to 2030
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for the school district
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision for the school district and what a 'Portrait of a Graduate' from Smithville schools could look like



The scenarios developed during this Think-Tank workshop and outlined in this report are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for future of the school district. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key strategic actions for the district and how various groups might best contribute to future developments.





5.0 | FORCES SHAPING THE FUTURE – MACRO TRENDS

Think-Tank participants explored the forces of change shaping the future of the Smithville School District, including three key areas of emerging macro trends and forces of change. Perceptions around the nature of impact of these trends, both in terms of size and timing of impact, were explored to gauge how important participants consider the trends. Participants discussed the emerging trends on global, regional and local scales, and related them directly to the school district in terms of how well prepared they considered the district.

Specifically, the key trend areas included:

- Demographics, population and mass urbanization
- Energy, food, water and climate change
- Technology and the speed of change

In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to long-term resiliency for the school district is the ability to anticipate change, adapt, and remain agile in response to emerging trends.

Of particular relevance to the discussion on trends is the speed and scale of change occurring. Newly developed innovations are being implemented globally and locally at all scales, thereby changing the face of industries and society in a rapid and profound way. A concern expressed at the Think-Tank was the perceived ability of the school district to adapt and respond to these changes. Velocity and trajectory are key elements that often create resistance to change and require clear communication and outreach to promote trust around the purpose of change. Think-Tank participants emphasized the need to provide clarity, inclusion, and open communication to the community as the school district pursues its preferred future.

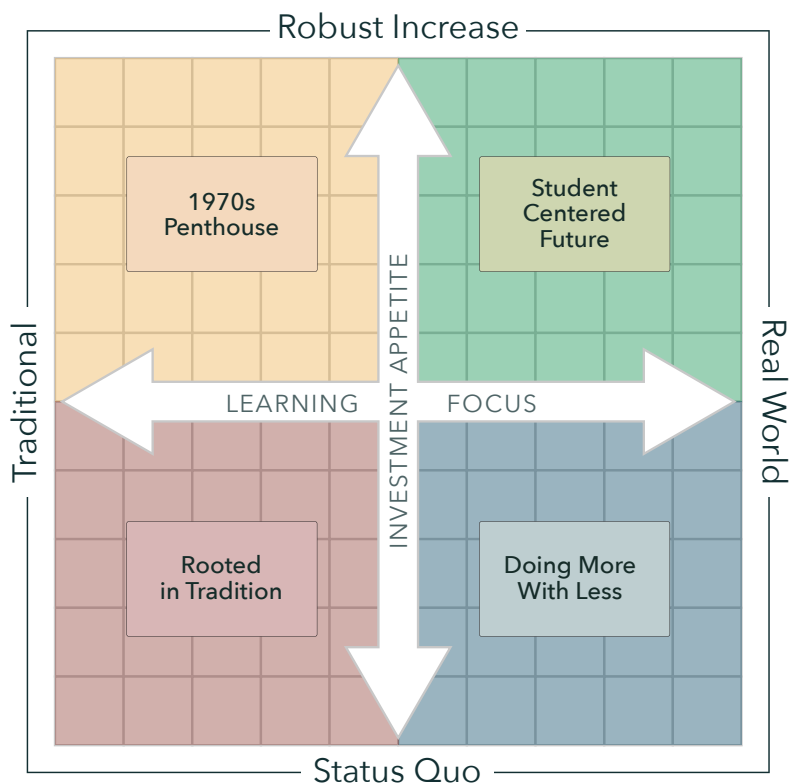




6.0 | CREATING THE SCENARIO FRAMEWORK

Workshop participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by the two major axes, 'Learning Focus' and 'Investment Appetite'. Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each driver axes. Participants were divided into four groups to develop a narrative for each scenario. Each group was asked to describe the characteristics of the Smithville School District in 2030 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given. After the characteristics were established, Think-Tank participants were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2023, 2025 and 2030, and to give their scenario a descriptive name. The name is intended to represent the description of the scenario in the form of a short title. Narratives, descriptions, and names of each scenario as developed by the workshop participants are included in the following sections.

The community invests significantly in the school district with an objective of becoming a premier school district that provides excellent quality infrastructure, services and programming.



Learning remains grounded in book smarts and memorization of information. School districts follow the traditional schooling by grades K-12. Student progress is marked by base knowledge acquisition for each grade level. Schools prepare students for college, university, and the trades following traditional educational pathways.

Learning is achieved by engaging in real-world settings through experiential study such as internships and apprenticeships. Schools partner with employers to provide work experiences and to develop a workforce pipeline. Learning progresses at different rates for each student and learning is individualized.

The school district maintains its already high-quality educational services for Smithville students. The community focuses on getting the best value for money and keeping costs and taxes reasonably low.



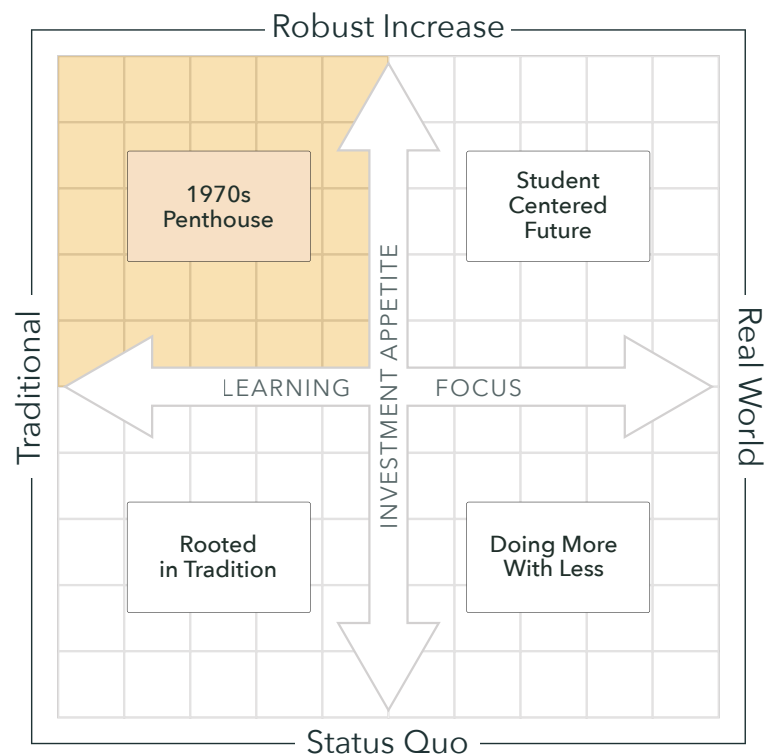
»»»»» 6.1 | SCENARIO A: 1970'S PENTHOUSE

This scenario forecasts a future where the Smithville community increases its investment significantly in school district programs, services, and facilities.

Students and teachers enjoy top of the line equipment and classroom resources that support a traditional K-12 educational system. Learning in Smithville remains grounded in book smarts and memorization marked by base knowledge acquisition that teaches to the test. The primary goal for students is to pass onto the next sequential grade level at the end of every school year and to attend a 4-year college or trade school. Families are attracted to the district on the basis of its reputation for successful students well versed in the basics that support traditional career pathways. Alternative programs and services are not provided and this hinders innovation and non-traditional career options. Over time and with changing social and demographic needs, this rigid approach to learning discourages creative teachers and students who seek experiential and alternative learning pathways. The school district fails to adapt to change and lags behind.



The '1970's Penthouse' scenario paints a future where Smithville schools are well-funded for traditional-style learning in grades K-12. Over time, the district loses its competitive edge. The inflexibility of the district's approach to learning causes more progressive teachers and families to leave in search of expanded educational and career building options.



SCENARIO A CHARACTERISTICS: '1970S PENTHOUSE' - 2030

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where funding for education is at an all-time high for traditional K-12 schooling. Staff and teachers are paid well. Graduates are ready for college and vocational programs, but other career preparation and options are lacking.



EDUCATION AND LEARNING SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

- Students know the basics and are geared for 4-year college and vocational programs.
- Early childhood and post-12th grade options are expanded, yet Smithville does not have a CAPS program, and on-the-job training is not provided for students.
- Education follows traditional tried-and-true pathways to graduation. Innovation and creativity is stifled due to limited educational options for students.
- There are missed opportunities for students in terms of career options. Teachers begin to leave due to inflexibility of approach to learning.



SCHOOL DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

- The Smithville School District funding supports high quality resources, technology, infrastructure, facilities, and staff.
- Teachers, staff, and students enjoy top of the line equipment and classroom resources.
- Food services are high quality and provide appealing, nutritious options for students K-12.
- Traditional staffing is expanded. There are more teachers, administrators, behavior support, interventionists, and coaches.



STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

- Fully funded high quality schools attract families but require higher taxes and higher cost of living in Smithville.
- There is less community resistance to public education because the learning system is familiar to parents and hasn't changed much since they went to school.
- The community's reputation for good schools attracts different demographics to the district.
- High cost of living in Smithville forces older residents to leave the school district for less expensive districts.

In the '1970s Penthouse' scenario, the Smithville School District doubles down on what it is good at and provides high quality traditional K-12 educational opportunities for its students. Over time, this inward focus causes isolation and the district loses its competitive edge.

2023 HEADLINE NEWS:

"Smithville School District tax levy passes!"



2025 HEADLINE NEWS:

"Smithville opens new early childhood center and Alternative School."



2030 HEADLINE NEWS:

Smithville experiences enrollment declines despite premier learning environment and high teacher salary.





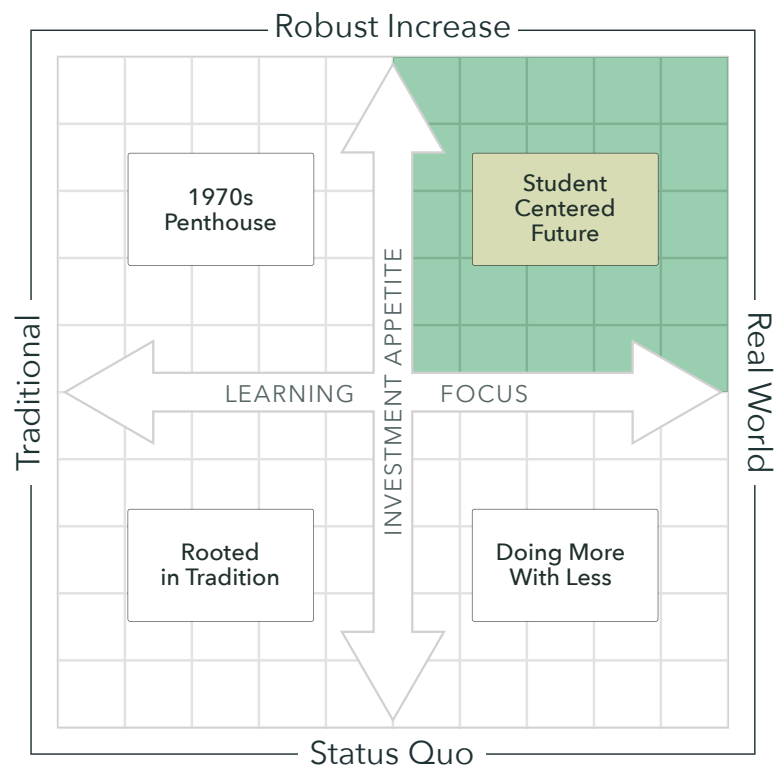
6.2 | SCENARIO B: STUDENT CENTERED FUTURE

This scenario forecasts a future where learning in Smithville schools builds off of foundational knowledge and engages students in real-world settings through experiential study such as internships and apprenticeships.

Learning shifts to competency based learning and away from grade level progression. Learning is personalized and students progress at different rates according to individual need and capability. Career pathways are expanded and alternative pathways are provided for those not seeking traditional options. Parents and the community support the school system with high levels of investment, both in volunteer time and tax revenues. High taxes force some older residents to seek districts are not as expensive, but these departures are offset by new families wanting to move into the district for the schools. Teachers and staff are paid well and respected for their services. Employers and businesses work closely with schools to provide learning experiences for students at all stages of learning. High levels of engagement involve consistent open and transparent communication between the school system, parents and the community, and trust levels are high. Smithville acquires the reputation of being a premier school district with top-quality teaching, infrastructure, services, and programming.



The 'Student Centered Future' scenario paints a future where Smithville School District acquires the status of a progressive 'premier' school system that is well-funded and cutting-edge. Learning is personalized and student success is holistic and balanced.



SCENARIO B CHARACTERISTICS: 'STUDENT CENTERED FUTURE' - 2030

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where learning is student centered and forward focused. Educational programs and services are fully funded and geared to success for each individual student. The accumulated effects of Real World Learning propel the community and school system into an integrated experiential learning system.

In the 'Student Centered Future' scenario, parents, teachers, staff, and community work together to create a flexible and adaptable educational environment that prioritizes personal competency and individualized learning in a rapidly changing world.



EDUCATION AND LEARNING SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

- Learning shifts to competency based learning and away from grade levels. Learning is personalized and flexible there are no yearly calendars or traditional day sequences.
- Smithville students are given more opportunities to learn in various settings and career fields. Career exploration begins early in elementary school.
- Education is expanded beyond the basics and sports to include art, sciences, STEM club, innovation lab, and e-sports. Pods of learning occur around content.
- Preschool and early childhood education is provided for all students.

2023 HEADLINE NEWS:

Gear up for change!



SCHOOL DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

- School district programs and services are fully funded and teachers and staff are paid and supported well. Support roles are funded and staff training is paid for.
- Facility enhancements are cost effective and environmentally responsible. Forward-thinking is applied to school renovations including classroom configuration, student safety, and comfort.
- Transportation services are available for all students and expand to accommodate flexible school schedules.
- Advanced technology is funded to support instruction and global opportunities; flexibility is maintained to adapt quickly to new technology.

2025 HEADLINE NEWS:

Gentrification hits rural America.



STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

- High parental involvement is supported by wrap around services that support families.
- Mental health, self-care, and 'Balance' are prioritized for students. Soft skills are taught and fostered.
- The school district, parents, and community maintain high trust and positive communication.
- Students are involved in decision-making and hold representation on committees and the school board.

2030 HEADLINE NEWS:

Students take over!





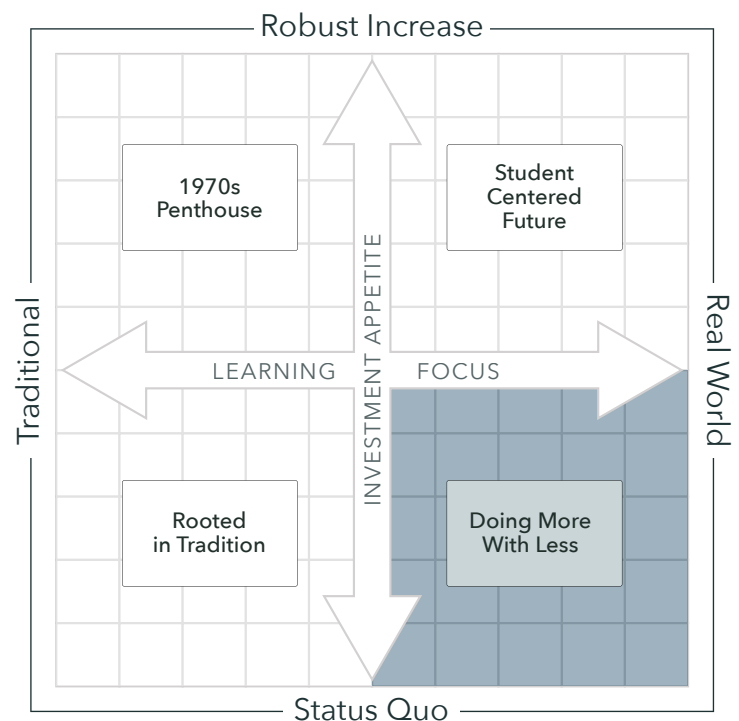
»»»»» 6.3 | SCENARIO C: DOING MORE WITH LESS

This scenario forecasts a future where parents and the community are actively engaged in Smithville’s educational system.

Volunteers and local businesses provide a heightened infusion of time and resources to support school district operations. The school district seeks to maintain its high-quality infrastructure and services and residents are happy with high value for money. Real World Learning is embraced and learning moves to more competency and project-based learning. Working closely with local employers, teachers infuse ‘soft skills’ and real-world experiences into the curriculum. More virtual options are provided to students, and facilities are repurposed to avoid building new school infrastructure. Over time, the community’s refusal to increase funding for expanded services and evolving programs begins to limit the district’s capacity to provide new technologies and programs for students. Some teachers and staff are let go to cut costs and classroom sizes increase. Polarization and distrust occurs between parents and the school district and teachers are forced to do more with less. The necessity of increased investment meets resistance in the community.



The ‘Doing More with Less’ scenario paints a future where the slow squeeze of restrictive investment gradually impacts the district’s ability to provide the expected exemplary educational opportunities that Smithville currently enjoys.



SCENARIO C CHARACTERISTICS: 'DOING MORE WITH LESS' - 2030

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where learning options for students are expanded with the involvement of parental and community volunteers. The district struggles to keep high-quality staff and teachers as funding levels are limited to keep taxes low. Eventually quality delivery suffers and the district loses its forward momentum.

In the 'Doing More with Less' scenario, the Smithville School District continues to maintain its already high-quality education, but the community's desire to keep costs low restricts the district's ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.



EDUCATION AND LEARNING SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

- Education moves from assessment-based learning to project-based learning.
- Teachers infuse 'soft skills' and real world abilities into curriculum at all levels.
- Smithville pursues a 'Grow your own' approach: Cadet/A+ students who are aspiring to be teachers, principals, and process coordinators are placed in the classroom with teachers to help teach younger students.
- The district engages more with the community to bring in volunteers, speakers and real world experiences for students.

2023 HEADLINE NEWS:

Real World Ready!



SCHOOL DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

- The district rethinks facilities and repurposes buildings to focus more on people and not brick and mortar.
- To prevent the need for expansion, more virtual options are provided for classes and spaces are shared.
- Programming is shifted; underutilized staff are let go to focus more on Real World Learning teachers. Teacher salaries do not keep up with other high-quality districts, and many leave for higher pay elsewhere.
- Funding is limited for new facilities, programs, teachers and staff. The district relies heavily on community and student volunteer help.

2025 HEADLINE NEWS:

**Reallocating
Resources - Seeking
Community Partners**



STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

- The school district encourages more parental and community involvement. Real World Learning provides more options and connections with local businesses and programs.
- Polarization occurs - For some, parental trust in the district increases with more involvement and understanding. For others, resistance to change and new approaches to learning builds distrust.
- The district loses staff and teachers with more rigid beliefs and those not willing to have open minds about new learning / teaching methods.

2030 HEADLINE NEWS:

Not there yet.





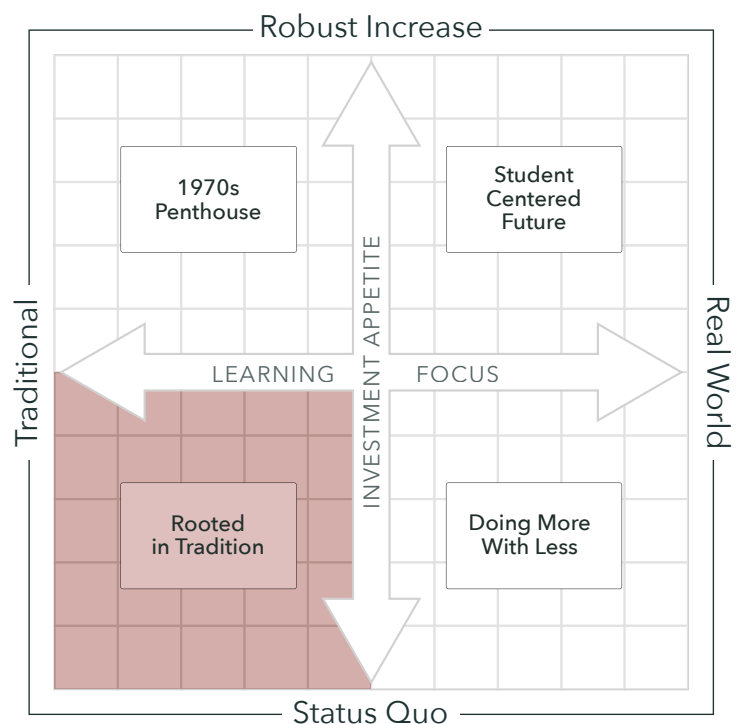
6.4 | SCENARIO D: ROOTED IN TRADITION

This scenario forecasts a future where Smithville’s educational system is rooted in tradition and the way things have always been done.

Likewise, the community continues to enjoy low taxes and high-quality services. Learning in Smithville adheres to the traditional K-12 grade progression and some students excel. Warrior pride is strong and the sports program continues to highlight and excel at traditional sports such as football and baseball. Small-town values continue to exist, but resistance to change and lack of innovation or alternative pathways for students hinder real-world preparedness for the future. New families and demographics are not attracted to the school district due to its inward focus and lack of welcoming environment and this means a continued lack of student diversity. The community’s insistence on restricted investment for education forces high-quality teachers to leave to other districts for better pay. School-age families begin to understand the lack of opportunities for their students compared to elsewhere and leave for other districts or private schools.



The ‘Rooted in Tradition’ scenario paints a future where the Smithville School District is not adaptable to the changing needs of students as they grapple with a rapidly changing world. Lack of investment negatively impacts teacher quality, resources and ultimately student success.



SCENARIO D CHARACTERISTICS: 'ROOTED IN TRADITION' - 2030

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future that is comfortable and familiar. Taxes are low and students are prepared for traditional career pathways. Lack of funding for education over time reduces the quality of education as teachers leave and career opportunities for students are limited.

In the 'Rooted in Tradition' scenario, the school district continues to foster a small town familiar approach to education. This does not allow the district to adapt to societal and technological trends occurring in the world and students get left behind.



EDUCATION AND LEARNING SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

- The district's learning process is rooted in the traditional K-12 grade system. Students are grounded in book smarts and memorization of facts.
- Failure to evolve and not grow with the times by utilizing new technologies such as virtual reality/AI causes Smithville students to fall behind other school districts.
- A traditional approach to learning attracts some families that want a small town environment for their students. For others, this approach divides the community and parents.
- Students following traditional educational pathways and careers succeed, but those with alternative needs and aspirations are not serviced well in the district.

2023 HEADLINE NEWS:

Infrastructure improves as result of bond passing.



SCHOOL DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCE CHARACTERISTICS

- Community prioritization of low tax rates affects district morale. Staff and teacher retention fluctuates without increased compensation and resources.
- Staff quality and experience is low compared to other districts due to constrained funding for salaries.
- Buildings and playgrounds deteriorate over time without increased funding for repairs and upkeep.
- The district is unable to adapt to the changing needs of students and teachers. Lack of funding for needed new resources allows the district to fall behind.

2025 HEADLINE NEWS:

Smithville looks to create funding resources.



STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

- Without real world learning options to learn new skills and career pathways, students and parents become frustrated and unhappy with the educational system.
- Over time, trust between parents and the district deteriorates as parents realize their students are losing out on new opportunities available in other districts.
- Community partnerships and parental engagement is difficult to achieve with few options for involvement.
- Small town community values exist but constrain innovation and real-world preparedness for students.

2030 HEADLINE NEWS:

Smithville struggles with teacher retention due to funding shortage.



7.0 | LEAST DESIRED, EXPECTED, AND PREFERRED FUTURES

7.1 | LEAST DESIRED FUTURE - SCENARIO D - ROOTED IN TRADITION

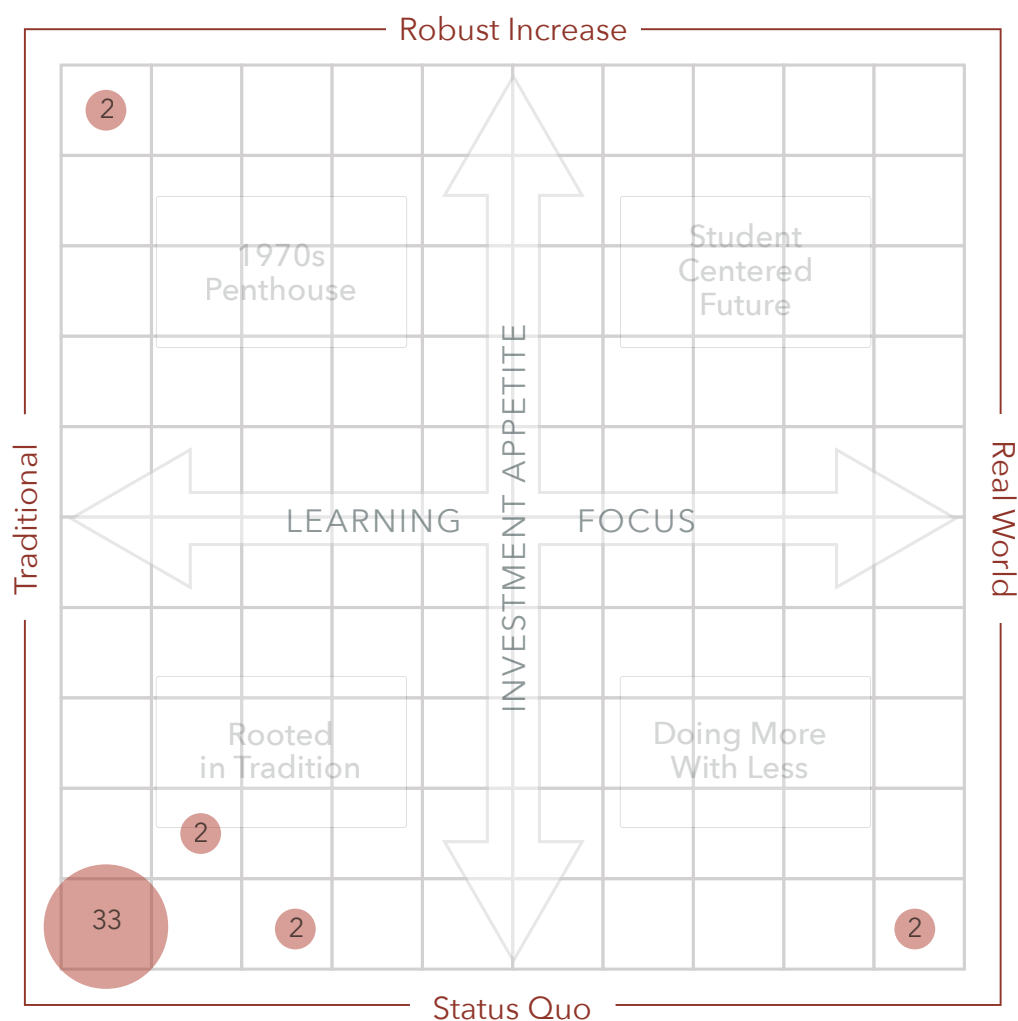
The Least Desired Future was defined as “the future that you think will be most undesirable (or least optimal or least desired) future of the school district in 2030.” The vast majority of Think Tank participants most definitely considered Scenario D, ‘Rooted in Tradition,’ to be the Least Desired Future for the Smithville School District.



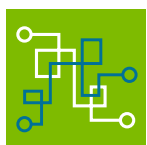
SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT Least Desired Future 2030

1-2

30+



The least desired future is one where community members have said, ‘We don’t want that.’ This provides leadership a mandate to be sure the trajectory of the school district is guided towards the preferred future scenario B, ‘Student Centered Future’.



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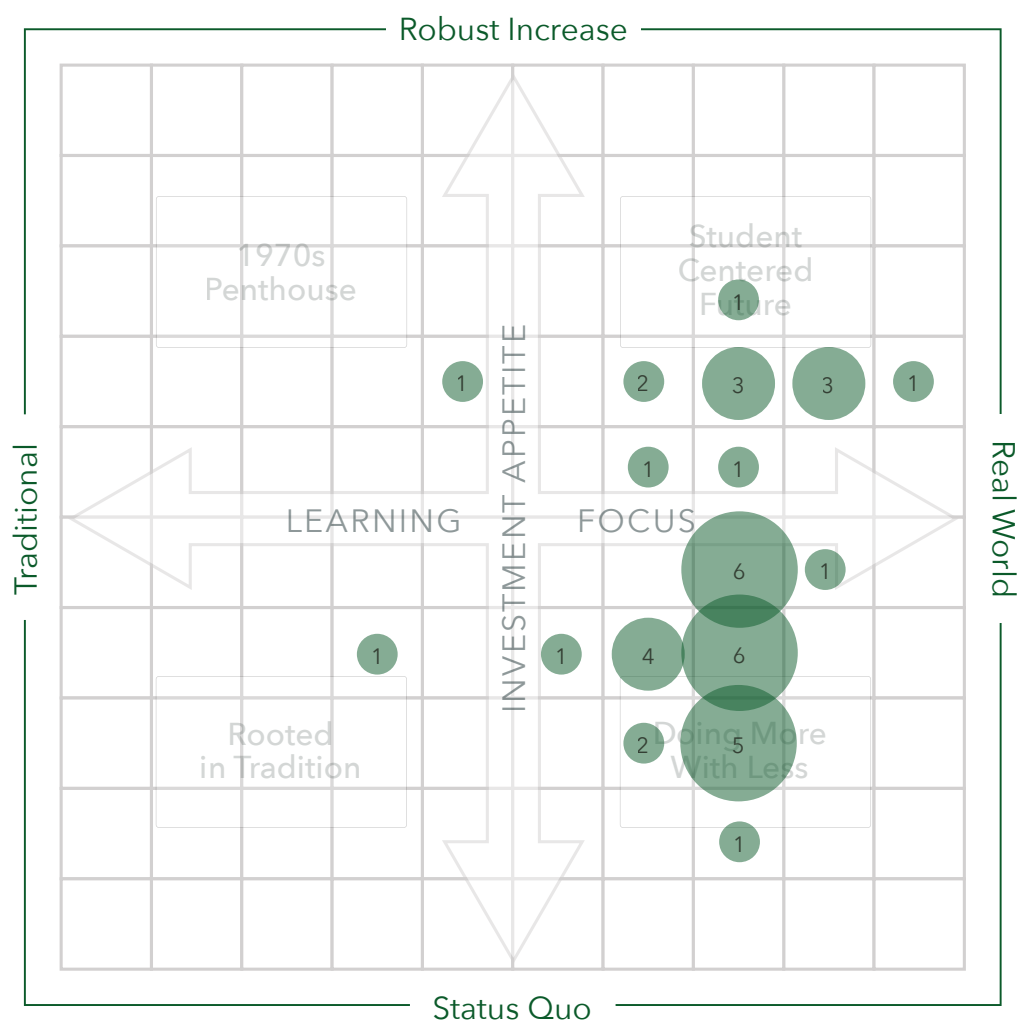
- The data of the least desired future shows a strong concentration in the bottom corner of the quadrant in Scenario D, ‘Rooted in Tradition.’ This indicates a strong desire not to head in that direction.
- The least desired future provides a clear sense that respondents do not desire Status Quo investment in the school district, nor do they desire a strictly traditional approach to education for their students.

7.2 | EXPECTED FUTURE - SCENARIO C - DOING MORE WITH LESS

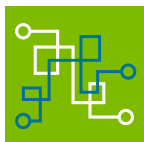
The expected future is one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory of the Smithville School District. Workshop participants generally indicated that Scenario C, “Doing More with Less”, is the scenario they believed most represented the expected future for the school district. Some Think-Tank participants noted that the school district was already in Scenario C, and already on the path to the preferred future along this axis with the adoption of Real World Learning.



SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT Expected Future 2030



The Expected Future represents the future that is most likely to happen if the school district does nothing to change direction or trajectory.



FutureInsight

- The expected future may be familiar, but Think-Tank participants have shown a clear desire to move away from the status quo to the preferred future.
- The expected future as seen by Think-Tank participants indicates the need for greater change along the investment appetite axis than the learning focus axis.

7.3 | PREFERRED FUTURE - SCENARIO B - STUDENT CENTERED FUTURE

While each of the scenarios were viewed as plausible, Think-Tank participants expressed a clear preference for one of the presented outcomes, Scenario B, “Student Centered Future.” Think-Tank participants discussed the consequences of inaction, and the need to take a realistic approach to what can be accomplished in the next 5-10 years. Velocity, or rate of change, was discussed as a potential factor that could derail a unified progression to the preferred future. Slow, deliberate, and open communications, along with continued dialogue and understanding were considered critical to the process.

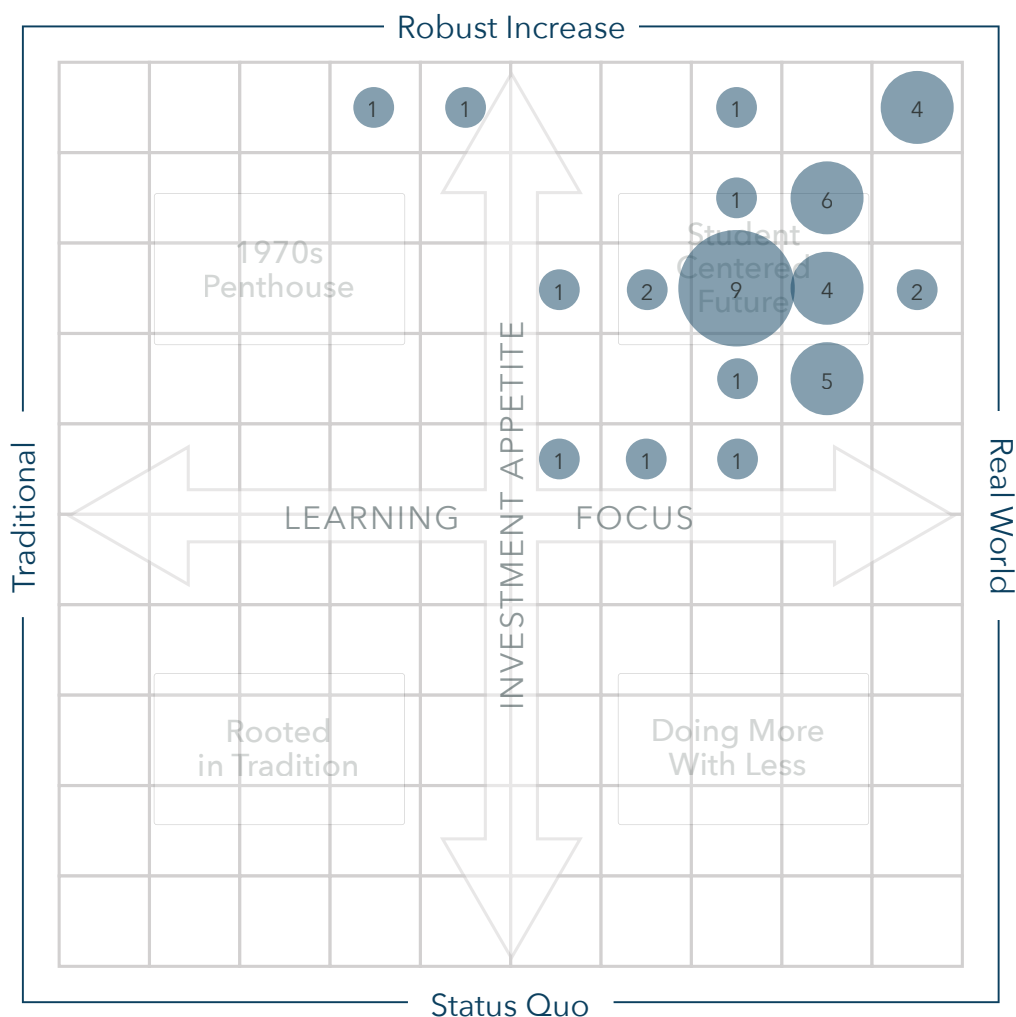


SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT Preferred Future 2030

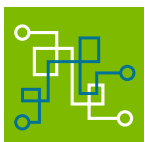
1-3

4-6

7-10



Becoming a future-focused, resilient, and adaptable school district will place the Smithville School District on the path to the Preferred Future.



FutureInsight

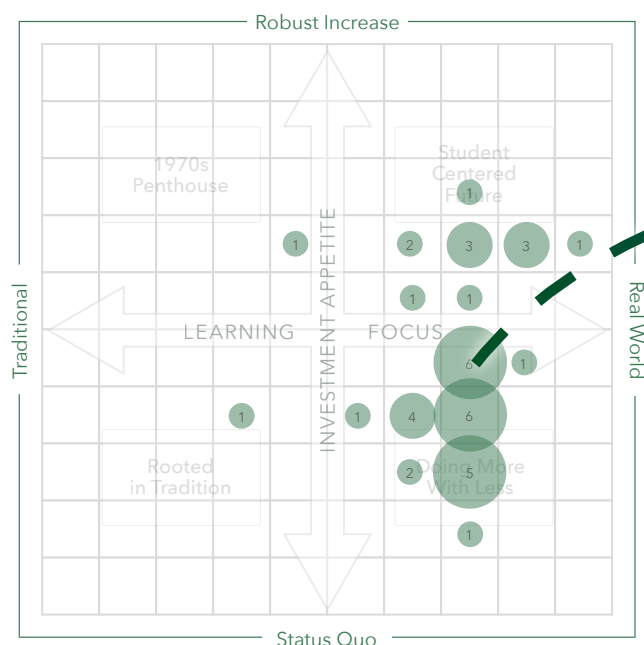
- The concentration of color in Scenario B, ‘Student Centered Future,’ indicates a close alignment of thinking among Think-Tank participants.
- The Think-Tank scenario planning is a significant step in the community’s transparent process to define collectively how the school district will strategically plan to achieve its preferred future.

7.4 | GETTING TO THE PREFERRED FUTURE

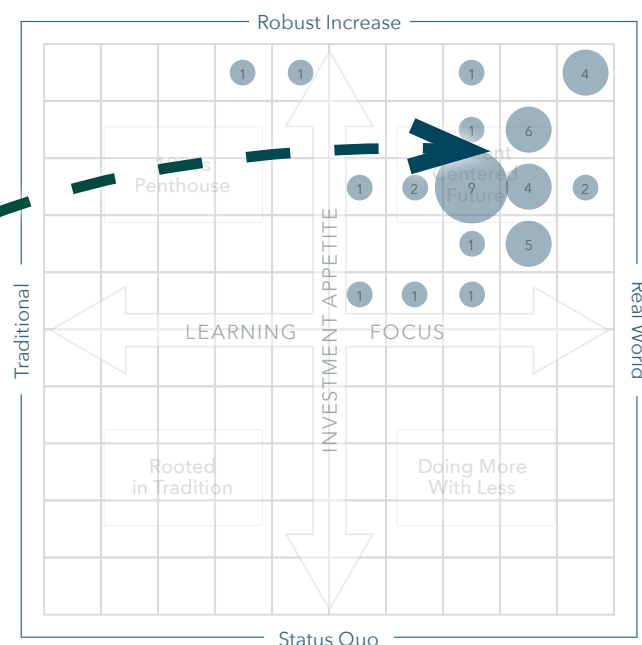
Think-Tank participants discussed the ramifications and implications of failing to achieve the preferred future. While there was strong alignment among participants that Scenario B, 'Student Centered Future' represented the preferred scenario for the Smithville School District, it was also recognized that it will be necessary to leverage trends and opportunities that present themselves over the course of time. The current Real World Learning approach was seen by participants as a catalyst to taking the right steps towards the preferred future for the district.

Because of the long-term nature of the Scenario Planning methodology, stakeholders often see the 'distant future vision (2030)' as unattainable and unrealistic. However, this underestimates the progress that can be made during the intervening years, and the cumulative positive impacts of change.

SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Expected Future 2030

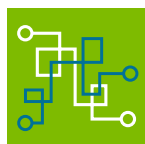


SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Preferred Future 2030



"I believe that the Smithville School District needs innovative learning opportunities for students to grow from great to premier/elite....Smithville is a great district because they provide a great traditional approach to learning. And while there is nothing wrong with a traditional approach in learning, to be premier or elite, in my mind, requires innovation. Premier and elite schools are superior because they have something that very few have. They create a new and better way to increase performance and get high-achieving results. Research would have to be performed, and a team would need to be created to find innovative ways to change traditional learning into a model that works better."

- Community Survey Respondent



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- Arriving at a point of consensus among stakeholders is very important to the visioning process as it provides a sense of cohesion and balanced solutions going forward.
- Think-Tank participants were excited to note that the school district was already far along the horizontal axis with respect to learning focus. The focus will need to be on maintaining that momentum and finding ways to invest in it.



8.0 | SMALL-GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Small-group discussions on the desired characteristics for a Portrait of a Graduate and the school district allowed Think-Tank participants to drill down on priorities and goals for the future.

On the second day of the Think-Tank, participants briefly reviewed the previous day's progress, including the survey, scenario descriptions, and heatmap results. Building on that information, participants spent the majority of the morning in smaller breakout groups exploring two key topics: characteristics of the Portrait of a Graduate, and characteristics of how the Smithville School District should look in 2030. The small groups reported out on both sets of characteristics, and then spent the balance of the morning exploring potential strategies that could be taken to achieve the preferred future for the Smithville School District. Think-Tank participants reconvened to the large-group and each small group presented their strategies accompanied by discussion on potential action steps.

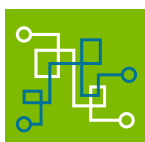
To conclude the Think-Tank Workshop, two working groups of volunteers were assembled. The first is tasked with synthesizing the characteristics of the Portrait of a Graduate for Smithville Schools. The second working group will synthesize the strategies presented into the Strategic Pillars that will serve as the foundation for Focus Group discussions in February.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE WORKING GROUP

Carol Noecker	Whitney Carlile
Tracy Platt	Valerie Partch
Lily Medley	Alecia Neth

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Lindsey Pflugradt	Lauren Martinez
Scott Jacoby	Sara Freeman
Tod Winterboer	Amanda McKluskey



FutureInsight

- A Portrait of a Graduate represents a school district's vision for the skills, character traits, and/or social-emotional competencies that students need to succeed in college, career, and life. (Panorama Education)
- Velocity is an important element in changing direction. Think-Tank participants emphasized the need for open and transparent communication that builds trust, confidence and understanding as the school district takes steps to move to the preferred future.

9.0 | NEXT STEPS

Please stay connected to the school district's strategic planning project at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/smithville-school-district/>.

Following the Think-Tank, this Think-Tank Report was written and published for distribution. The project will then move into the 'Plan Formulation' phase of the strategic planning process.

SMITHVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



- December 8, 2022 – The first Working Group, led by Dr. Michelle Kratofil, will begin December meetings to determine the characteristics and narrative for the Smithville Portrait of a Graduate.
- January 10, 2023 – In January, Future iQ will convene the second Working Group to synthesize the accumulated data from the Community Survey and the Think-Tank into specific Strategic Pillars for the Strategic Plan.
- February 13-15, 2023 - Focus Groups will be convened in February around each Strategic Pillar to build out the action areas of each pillar.
- March – May 2023 – The accumulated input and data for the Strategic Plan will be compiled into the final plan. This will include an Implementation Plan.
- May 17, 2023 – The Smithville School District Future Summit will be held to celebrate the strategic planning process and to present the final report to the community.





»»»» 10.0 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

School administrators, Teachers, staff, School Board Members, residents and community stakeholders have engaged in the district's strategic planning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest has ensured discussions are open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within the school district. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment participants have to the future of the Smithville School District.

Future iQ would like to thank the individuals that took the Community Survey, as well as the 50 Think-Tank participants. We recognize that taking part in the two four-hour Think-Tank morning sessions was a significant commitment. Additionally, we would like to thank Denise Harwood and Michelle Kratofil (School District Administration) and David Baldner (Private Consultant) who meet weekly with Future iQ to provide the expertise that helps guide this project. Your time and dedication are greatly appreciated.



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Whitney Carlile	Ian Saxton
Denney Fales	Susan Whitacre
	Scott Haggerty

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Damien Boley	Judd Malter	Linsey Pflugradt
Kristine Bunch	Julia Mann	Neil Sanders
Whitney Carlile	Rachael Marchetti	Ann Santulli
Lance Cowan	Lauren Martinez	Matt Schmndt
Kim Davis	Amanda McCluskey	Leah Shipley
Annie Frazier	Lily Medley	Kristin Turner
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Robert Hedgecorth	Annie Palmer	Erika Winston
Scott Jacoby	Valerie Partch	Tod Winterboer
Karen Johnson		





»»»» 11.0 | CONTACT DETAILS

For more information on the Smithville School District's strategic planning process, please contact:



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»»»» 12.0 | ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com.



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FUTURE OF LEARNING IN SMITHVILLE

THINK-TANK REPORT

SMITHVILLE, MISSOURI, USA

DECEMBER 2022

SMITHVILLE



School District