

# *From Strong to* **STRONGER**

PAFE Strategic Plan 2025-2030



# VISION

*“If people could see the schools in action, they would be blown away.”*



Panhandle Alliance for Education advocates for quality education in the Lake Pend Oreille School District and is a leader among community education foundations throughout the state and region.

PAFE envisions a community where every child can realize their full potential, supported by engaged families, inspired educators, and a community that values education as a cornerstone of prosperity.

# MISSION

*Excellence in education...*



The Panhandle Alliance for Education strives to promote excellence in education and broad-based community support for the Lake Pend Oreille School District.



As an independent organization, we create and sustain an endowment to provide resources in support of effective teaching, learning, and school management.

# METHODOLOGY

*A collective effort...*



This strategic plan is a collective effort that reflects the feedback of our school district leadership, top donors, emeritus board, and community.

Prior to a two-day facilitated planning workshop in January 2025, the research phase began in October 2024 with focus groups (60 people) and surveys (114 respondents). A briefing report and an information package were prepared and sent to attendees (22 PAFE board members) of the two-day strategic planning workshop facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Sutherns on Jan 13 - 14, 2025. This thorough process ensured that our strategic plan is well-informed and comprehensive.

This plan was authored by Rebecca Sutherns and Lisa Gerber and refined by the steering committee consisting of Amy Longanecker, Kendon Perry, Kelly Prior, and Chris Blanford.

# Decision Framework

The group agreed on three guiding principles for this plan:



Everything PAFE does should have a measurable impact.  
It should also meet a need without increasing the district's administrative burden.

The ideas for all PAFE programs and initiatives are district and educator-led. We rely on the experts to understand what gaps need to be filled. PAFE operates beyond simply writing checks to the District. We strategically fund programs that fill critical academic gaps and enhance facilities.

This approach creates a vital feedback loop demonstrating to donors how their contributions are intentionally and impactfully spent—a crucial element in our fundraising success. By defining our implementation role carefully, we maximize impact while respecting the district's expertise and avoiding additional administrative burden.

# FROM STRONG TO STRONGER



PAFE stands at a moment of profound opportunity. We are proud of our core programs that invest in the whole child from birth to age 18. Our early childhood literacy programs ensure that children are ready to enter school. Our teacher grants and strategic initiatives ensure they are ready to learn and graduate to go on as thriving citizens. Our work not only supports public education; it's about shaping a brighter future for our community.

And, public education faces threats in funding. Our facilities need updates, educators are under-resourced, and many students don't have the fundamentals they need to be able to learn.

Now, PAFE is ready to elevate its impact by expanding its reach, engaging community partners, and continuing to support educational experiences that resonate throughout the district. This strategic plan sets the stage for PAFE's evolution from a strong organization to a stronger one - maintaining its excellence while amplifying its impact.

As the primary “fan club” of public education, we applaud the district's strength-based leadership and our outstanding and dedicated educators who do so much with so little.

**Imagine what they could do with more.**

# PANHANDLE ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION STRATEGIC GOALS

2025-2030

**Increase investment  
in students' readiness  
to learn**

**Become a  
state-wide leader in  
building support for  
public education**

**Align financial  
activities with  
strategic priorities**

**Maintain  
organizational  
excellence and  
momentum**



The PAFE Strategic Plan focuses on four goals to support our public school system by filling academic gaps and enhancing existing programs.



# 1. Increase investment in students' readiness to learn

For students to learn, they must be physically and emotionally prepared, feel safe and nourished, and have a positive physical learning environment. Dated facilities impact classroom size and hinder modern, state-of-the-art learning. When some students are equipped to learn and others are challenged, the entire classroom is affected.

With PAFE helping to address this challenge, students will be set up for success.

## Objectives

- 1.1** Expand early childhood programs to serve a broader and younger audience.
- 1.2** Invest in behavioral and mental health and nutrition supports to foster student well-being and effective learning environments, especially in K to 6.
- 1.3** Invest in initiatives that support student safety and access to trusted adults.
- 1.4** Invest in and be a catalyst for investment in facilities, remodels, and programming enhancements.

**How can we make a difference, and what gaps can we creatively fill?**

**Become a state-wide leader in building support for public education**

**Maintain organizational excellence and momentum**

**Align financial activities with strategic priorities**

***“The few students who aren’t ready to learn affect the others who are.”***





## 2. Become a state-wide leader in building support for public education

There is an ongoing need to make the case for public education as the funding formula is in flux at the state and national levels.

*“Education is the cornerstone of democracy. Universal public schools create a community where children can learn together regardless of socio-economic status.”*

**- PAFE Co-Founder, Mindy Cameron**

For the short term, LPOSD is safe thanks to the indefinite term levy, a long-term tax commitment, but it is predicted we'll need an additional bond or levy in November 2027. Also, school vouchers and opponents of quality education threaten funding.

**How do we become influencers in education?**

**Increase investment in students' readiness to learn**

**Align financial activities with strategic priorities**



**Maintain organizational excellence and momentum**

### Objectives

- 2.1** Network with other educational support organizations throughout Idaho to build a broader base of peer learning and public support.
- 2.2** Explore groups, people, avenues, and best practices to influence policies that support public education.

***“Education is the cornerstone of democracy...”***

### 3. Align financial activities with strategic priorities

PAFE is in a strong financial position, reflecting its fundraising success and the financial support of our generous donors. The financial strategy will guide asset growth allocation, including our impactful Legends programs and the endowment.

**How can PAFE strike a balance that doesn't undermine the ability to raise more money or cause the public to think levy support is unnecessary?**

Increase  
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students'  
readiness to learn

Become a state-wide  
leader in building  
support for public  
education



Maintain  
organizational  
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momentum

#### Objectives

**3.1** Build a reserve fund to ensure the timely availability of resources needed to achieve strategic goals.

**3.2** Maintain an endowment balance sufficient to cover PAFE overhead costs plus Legends initiatives that warrant ongoing funding.

**3.3** Explore untapped fundraising sources, including estate planning, large gifts, and sponsorships.

***“All the math backs into finance.”***

## 4. Maintain organizational excellence and momentum

PAFE has a track record of success and earned high reputational trust in its 20+ years, having fine-tuned proven strategies. We deploy programs not because people ask for them but because they make an impact. Guardrails that define and set guidelines are foundational to excellence.

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education

**How do we maintain our tried and true programs and gain momentum to think bigger and stay relevant as the environment in which we operate evolves?**

Align financial  
activities with  
strategic priorities



### Objectives

- 4.1 Conduct ongoing program evaluations and ensure funding commitments align with results.
- 4.2 Invest in Board governance excellence.
- 4.3 Ensure staff learning opportunities and skills evolve with PAFE's needs.

***“We have great reputational trust. We don’t want to be complacent as a board because we are a well-oiled machine”***

# INVESTING IN THE WHOLE CHILD



This strategic plan represents more than just goals and objectives - it embodies PAFE's commitment to ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive. By focusing on student readiness, building broader support for public education, maintaining financial sustainability, and maintaining and strengthening our organizational excellence, we are investing in the future of our community.

Our mission remains relevant, and our vision is clear: To help every child realize their potential through innovative learning and broad community support. We will turn this vision into reality with our partners, donors, and community members.



*When we invest in  
public education,  
we invest in  
possibility!*