

**Van Lunen Fellowship Applied School Project**  
**“Engaging the School Board in the Creation of a Strategic Planning Process”**  
Superintendent Rodney Jackson – St. Luke’s Lutheran School Oviedo, FL  
Consultant: Elisa Carlson (ecarlson@centralchristianschools.com)

- **What did I do?**

For my Van Lunen project I wanted to build on St. Luke’s history of success by engaging in a process of strategic planning with our School Board to build a vibrant future for our school. The goal was not just to produce a strategic “plan” that might sit on a shelf gathering dust but rather to make sure that our leadership was constantly looking ahead. Initially I engaged the School Board in a commitment to strategic planning as our primary focus as opposed to the day to day operations of the school. They were supportive and excited.

The next step was facilitating a series of focus groups with school parents and staff where they were invited to identify our school’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats along with “big hairy audacious goals” the school might pursue.

After concluding the focus groups, the School Board and administration held a Saturday retreat to review a summary of the focus group feedback and include their own analysis and ideas as well. Through a lot of give and take the board identified an initial set of strategic planning goals for the school’s future. Those goals will be refined and narrowed in the weeks and months ahead

- **What did I learn?**

I learned that strategic planning takes time and a great deal of patience. We are not as far along as I had expected and hoped to be. However, the initiation of this strategic planning process has been a positive experience for everyone involved and generated enthusiasm.

The goals we’ve established have the potential to build a strong and dynamic future for our school. It’s up to us as a board to continue the work and make strategic planning a part of our DNA as we create and cast vision for St. Luke’s in the years to come.

- **What difference is it making in my school?**

At this point in time there is no tangible or concrete difference in the workings of our school. That will come in our next steps when we create action teams that will be responsible for taking our goals and creating specific objectives and action steps to make our goals a reality. The School Board and administration will review the work of those action teams regularly to both monitor progress and ensure that the action teams’ work is consistent with the original goals. Because this is a strategic planning *process* and not just the creation of a strategic *plan* the evaluation and implementation of our strategic planning goals may change over time as circumstances and conditions surrounding the school dictate.