



THRIVING TOGETHER:

CCCBSD's Purpose-Driven Transformation

Strategic-Planning Case Study

The Children's Center for Communication /
Beverly School for the Deaf (CCCBSD)

Partnership Period: February – August 2024
Beverly, Massachusetts • 200 students | Birth – 22



Transforming communities
through organizational change.

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Overview

Tucked beside the Bass River on Boston's North Shore, The Children's Center for Communication / Beverly School for the Deaf (CCCBSD) hums with more than one language, more than one learning style, and more than one century of innovation.



Beverly School for the Deaf (BSD), founded in 1876, is Massachusetts' oldest continuously operating Deaf school. Classrooms revolve around American Sign Language (ASL), a language-rich environment where Deaf culture, bilingual literacy, and visual learning thrive.

CCCBSD provides educational outreach services to students who are deaf and hard of hearing throughout the Northshore of Boston in their local school districts.

The Children's Center for Communication (CCC) opened in 2004 to serve children who have diverse and complex communication needs. These students mostly are hearing students, but this program does serve some students who are hard of hearing. Many students communicate using spoken language, augmentative alternative communication devices and ASL with therapeutic supports embedded throughout the program.

Today the 7-acre 150-student campus hosts:

- Early-intervention home services (Birth–3)
- Integrated preschool & K-12 programs (ages 3–22)
- On-site audiology, speech, OT/PT, behavior, and mental-health teams
- A Life Skills & Transition track that partners with local employers for internships
- Family education events in ASL and spoken English
- Outreach Offices supporting students, families, and professionals across the state

Constituents praised the school's dual strength: in the bilingual discovery phase survey that Innivee Strategies distributed, 155 of 203 respondents (76%) said they were satisfied with CCCBSD, citing its "incredibly caring community" and expert staff. Yet by late 2023, one question surfaced in nearly every listening session:

"Who are we—together?"

"There was a lack of shared understanding about who we were as an organization, who we served, and where we were heading."

— Dr. Karen Hopkins,
Executive Director



Students flowed between programs, but policies, branding, and even payroll codes treated BSD and CCC as separate worlds. That divide, coupled with leadership turnover and an expired strategic plan, set the stage for a community-wide reset.

Bridging Two Language and Communication Philosophies

CCCBSD’s mission unfolds through two complementary yet distinct educational approaches that share space, resources, and a deep commitment to student potential.

Dimension	BSD: Deaf-Centric/Deaf Disabled	CCC: Communication / Multi-Disabled
Primary Language & Modality	American Sign Language (ASL) as a first language bilingual ASL ↔ English literacy with bimodal and multimodal approaches utilized	Multimodal communication toolkit — spoken language, sign language, AAC devices, and tactile or visual supports
Cultural Lens	Celebrates Deaf identity, history, and community norms (e.g., visual alerts, Deaf role models)	Centered on individualized access modalities; culture of interdisciplinary therapeutic collaboration
Teaching Strategies	Visual pedagogy, Deaf mentors, bilingual curriculum; leverage eyegaze, spatial grammar	Multisensory instruction, co-teaching with OT/PT/speech; individualized communication protocols
Accessibility Infrastructure	High-contrast visual signage, opensight lines, classroom lighting design for signing	Adaptive seating, sensory rooms, switch-accessible technology, on-staff nurses & therapists
Staffing Needs	Fluent ASL teachers, Deaf professionals, interpreters, cultural-competency PD	Speech-language pathologists, AAC specialists, behavior analysts, medical/feeding expertise

These differences enrich campus life, but without a unifying strategy, they once produced siloed procedures and competing resource priorities. The new plan aligns both philosophies under one vision of “dignity, purpose, and joy,” ensuring that every teaching method, accessibility feature, and staffing decision ladders up to a shared community outcome.

Why a New Strategic Plan? – And why Innivee Strategies?

When Dr. Karen Hopkins arrived on campus in December 2023 she felt equal parts pride and drift. With the conclusion of CCCBSD’s last strategic plan, some goals, metrics, and funding indicators remained unresolved or outdated.

Effective strategic planning is a participatory discipline that converts shared purpose into clear priorities, success measures, and accountability rhythms. While the school had an earlier administrator-led plan, Dr. Karen Hopkins recognized the opportunity to create a fresh, fully inclusive roadmap that engaged the broader community and built shared ownership.

A School at a Crossroads



Dual identity, single purpose.

CCCBSD houses two historic programs—The Children’s Center for Communication (multimodal/oral) and Beverly School for the Deaf (bilingual ASL-English). Staff and families celebrated each program’s success yet expressed confusion about “who we are together.”



Leadership transition.

On December 1, 2023, Dr. Karen Hopkins became CCCBSD’s Executive Director after 32 years in Maine Deaf education. She inherited a passionate but fragmented campus and a staff hungry for unification.



Constituents mandate for shared leadership.

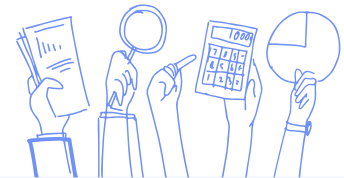
Karen’s first-month listening sessions revealed staff and families wanted to co-author the future, not receive a top-down plan.

Why partner with Innivee Strategies?



“Innivee Strategies bring thoughtful structure and clarity to the process... Their neutral facilitation created a safe space for honest dialogue and ownership.”

– Dr. Karen Hopkins, Executive Director



Dr. Karen Hopkins also knew the project couldn’t be run in-house. An earlier attempt, drafted mainly by administrators, had limited uptake; constituents wanted a voice - to be heard and be involved and understand the goals. Most did not know the outcome of the last strategic plan and were not sure they ever gained traction. What CCCBSD needed now was a trusted, external team fluent in Deaf culture, versed in multi-modal communication, and disciplined in data. That team was Innivee Strategies.

Innivee Strategies is a Deaf-led, disability-owned consulting firm that turns community insight into action. Through strategic planning, executive search, and data-driven needs assessments, we create accessible spaces where every constituents’ input shapes clear, measurable priorities—and we stay long enough to help teams make those priorities real.



Innivee Strategies proved the exact fit.

1

Deaf-Led Accessible Facilitation

Created an environment where Deaf, hearing, signing, and multi-disabled constituents felt fully understood and safe to speak.

2

Neutral Space for Candor

As an external, Deaf-led team with no stake in campus politics, Innivee Strategies enabled staff, families, and students to speak openly.

3

Bandwidth & Rigor

Provided a turnkey toolkit—project manager, bilingual analysts, design support, and ready-made accessible surveys—so staff could stay focused on teaching.

4

Purpose-Driven Board Leadership (PDBL)

Shifted every debate from “*What’s convenient for the organization?*” to “*What best serves our community’s purpose?*”

5

Proven Data-Driven Track Record

Brought experience from statewide projects in Louisiana, Maine, and Michigan to code and translate thousands of data points into actionable priorities.

6

Holistic Service Suite

Ensured CCCBSD wouldn’t just design a plan but would own the dashboards, rituals, and risk-mitigation tools to keep it alive.

7

Established Trust with Leadership

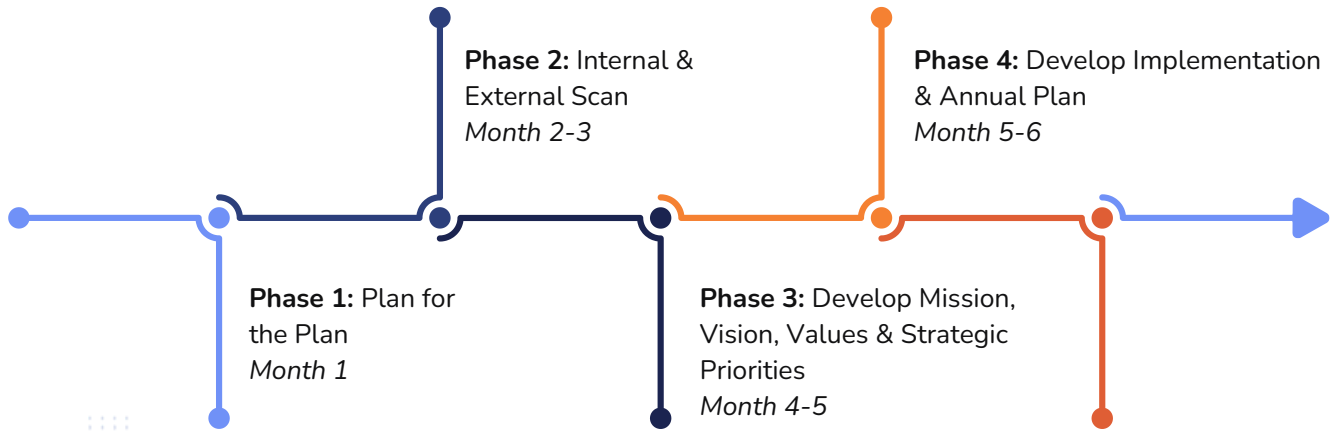
Because Dr. Karen Hopkins had partnered with Innivee in Maine, kickoff was immediate—no time lost, values alignment from day one.

The result: a community-authored, data-rich strategic plan that board members, funders, and families regard as both credible and inspiring — with clear metrics already delivering measurable wins within the first nine months.



Strategic Planning Method

Strategic planning at Innivee Strategies isn't a binder on a shelf— it's a four-phase, community-owned journey that weaves classic planning rigor with tools that elevate Deaf & disabled perspectives, all filtered through BoardSource's Purpose-Driven Board Leadership (PDBL) principles.



Phase	Key Questions	Inclusive Techniques
1: Plan for the Plan Month 1	What's our scope, schedule, and decision-making structure?	• Kick-off with leadership • Outline key roles and responsibilities • Identify key constituents to engage
2: Internal & External Scan Months 2 – 3	What do we believe, experience, and need? Where are the gaps & assets?	• Community survey, interviews, and focus groups in ASL and English • Review of internal documents and data
3: Develop Mission, Vision, Values & Strategic Priorities Months 4 – 5	What future are we willing to build, and how will we measure success?	• Train ad hoc committee on how to develop strategic priorities • Analyze data and community input together • Create mission, vision, values and strategic priorities
4: Develop Implementation & Annual Plan Months 5 – 6	How do we launch, and how will we keep momentum?	• Break down strategic priorities into actionable next steps • Identify timeframes, establish accountability structures, and determine resources needed

Challenges & Opportunities

Innivee Strategies' first assignment was to hold a mirror to CCCBSD's day-to-day reality. Ten focus groups and 184 bilingual survey responses painted a picture of a school brimming with talent, dedication, and community spirit—while also highlighting opportunities to strengthen its foundation and systems.

With listening sessions complete and surveys analyzed, the Innivee Strategies team distilled CCCBSD's realities into six interlocking themes. Together they explain why a fresh strategy was urgent and where the school could gain the most ground.

Snapshot: What We Heard

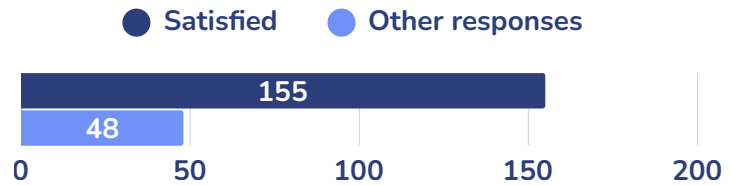
184 Bilingual surveys completed

10 Focus groups conducted

1 Week of classroom walk-throughs

6 Key participants engaged (staff, families, students, Deaf community, board, district/medical partners)

76% overall satisfaction



155 of 203 respondents rated CCCBSD positively in the bilingual discovery survey; most-cited strength: “incredibly caring community.”

Teacher Pipeline

● Joined past 3 years ● More than 3 years

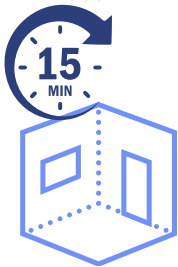


42% of teachers joined in the past 3 years; 38 of 91 teachers were new within three years—raising stability concerns.



90% of workforce is white

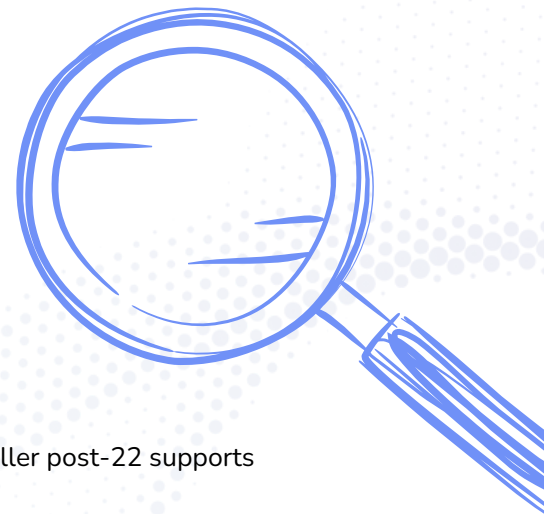
Deaf professionals under-represented in leadership—strengthening pipeline is a priority.



Space & Scheduling Pressure

Spaces at capacity

- Early childhood rooms were too small for the growing numbers of participants.
- Sensory rooms: Booked in 15-minute slots.
- Some classrooms were at capacity.



Continuum Gap

Continuum needs flagged

Earlier outreach (Birth–3), expanded services for Deaf students (3–22), and fuller post-22 supports (employment, independent living, college-bridge).



Earlier Outreach

Expanded



The data clustered into six themes:

The snapshot of surveys, focus groups, and classroom walk-throughs made clear patterns emerge. Taken together, the data clustered into six themes—each showing why a fresh strategy was urgent and where CCCBSD could gain the most ground.

1

Staff Pipeline & Retention

Vacancies and turnover—42% of teachers were new in the past three years—threatened stability.

2

Fragmented Identity

Focus-group refrain: “two schools under one roof.” Separate policies and branding diluted culture.

3

Facilities Pressure

Preschool and therapy rooms at capacity; sensory rooms limited to 15-minute slots.

4

Continuum Gaps

Calls for earlier outreach (Birth–3), expanded services for Deaf students (3–22), and post-22 support.

5

Equity & Representation

~90% White workforce; Deaf professionals under-represented in leadership roles.

6

Cultural Strength

76% satisfaction rate; stories of student joy, parent trust, and staff commitment stood out.

The Co-Created Plan at a Glance (2024 – 2027)

With challenges clarified and opportunities surfaced, CCCBSD’s committee moved from diagnosis to design—shaping a shared vision, mission, and five priorities to guide every program, budget, and training. Below and on the next page is the first snapshot of the four-year roadmap.

Vision: *For deaf and/or disabled individuals, their families, and communities to thrive with dignity, purpose, and joy.*

Mission: *Enhancing lives through person-centered, specialized educational programming in a language-rich, inclusive environment.*

Core Values: *Humanity, Belonging, Inclusivity, Collaboration, Integrity, Excellence*

Vision, Mission & Values in Action



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Snapshot of four-year roadmap

Strategic Priority	Flagship Year-1 Actions (Feb – Aug 2024)	Six-Month Progress (Aug 2024)
1. Employer of choice & diverse workforce	Launch staff-mentor ladder; host Deaf-professional recruitment fair; improve retention supports	Expanded staff culture initiatives: Silent Breakfasts for ASL growth, “What’s the Good News?” town halls, and community mural project. Three new board members added to diversify leadership; departmental budgets created; Leadership Team restructured for stronger collaboration.
2. Expand continuum of high-quality programs & services	Complete concept design for Family-Centered Early Childhood Building; pilot Post-22 Work Experience Hub	Referrals to Outreach program increased >10%; formal transition protocols established (EI → preschool, direct → consult); research launched into site-based Deaf Ed programs in public schools.
3. Equip families with resources & leadership	Double Family Advisory Group membership; launch monthly Family Learning Series in ASL/voice	Family programming attendance up >10%; Family Advisory Group expanded to include both CCC & BSD parents; monthly bilingual events sustained; new IEP Director role created to strengthen consistent family engagement.
4. Development & fiscal sustainability	Publish annual grant calendar; secure \$250K cornerstone pledge for facilities	Advancement Department created (Director + 2 staff); new CRM adopted; Development Committee formed; \$180k in new gifts identified; consultant contracted for growth planning.
5. Unified, inclusive culture & communication	Convene language-policy task force; embed values reflections in all-staff routines	100% of staff meetings now integrate values; new emergency preparedness consultant hired; employee handbook updated; structured collaboration schedules implemented for teachers, specialists, and leadership teams.

Early Impact

Within six months, CCCBSD’s plan has moved from paper to practice. A bilingual, multimodal early childhood program now serves Deaf children with diverse language needs—those using ASL, spoken English, or both—while emphasizing developmental milestones and language growth. Families are engaging more deeply across programs, and smoother transitions are supporting children’s movement between services. Shared rituals like ASL immersion breakfasts and town halls have re-energized staff culture. Meanwhile, therapy and meeting spaces have been added, and infrastructure for sustainability is growing through a new Advancement Department, CRM system, Development Committee, and three new trustees. Early wins show CCCBSD is actively living its vision of dignity, purpose, and joy.



Key Takeaways

From thousands of data points and months of joint work, three lessons rise to the surface — principles any school or nonprofit can apply the moment the planning binders close.

1. **Shared purpose unifies complexity.** When a dual-identity campus co-authors one vision, policies and resources snap into alignment.
2. **Community ownership turns plans into practice.** Because families, staff, and students wrote the priorities, they now champion the work—running dashboards, sharing “values-in-action” stories, and meeting every benchmark to date.
3. **Purpose-driven leadership unleashes ambition.** Using the PDBL lens shifted questions from “What can we afford?” to “What does our community need?”—leading to bold moves like a Post-22 Work Hub and a campus-wide language policy.

What Future Partners Can Expect

If you engage Innivee Strategies, here’s the kind of cause-and-effect you can anticipate, backed by CCCBSD’s early results.

Innivee Strategies Advantage

Tangible Result at CCCBSD



Deaf-led facilitation builds trust & accessibility



Constituents shared freely, producing bolder, equity-focused priorities.



Ready-made, fully accessible survey & focus-group tools



Project launched in days, not weeks; 184 bilingual/ASL responses captured with zero accessibility barriers.



PDBL framing centers community impact



Post-22 supports and a language policy stayed at the top—even though they stretch the traditional K-12 brief.



Living-strategy design embeds goals in daily routines



Benchmarks were met or on track at the first review cycle; progress conversations now belong to staff, not consultants.

Conclusion & Thank You

A strategic plan matters only when it shapes ordinary school days, not just off-site retreats. At CCCBSD, the first six months have shown what happens when purpose, data, and community ownership converge: staff are grounding decisions in shared values, families are co-designing programming, and new structures are strengthening sustainability for the long term.

Innivee Strategies thanks CCCBSD's leaders, families, and staff for trusting a Deaf-led team to guide this journey. Your openness and willingness to co-own the hard questions turned planning into real movement.

If you want a strategy that drives day-to-day results and keeps your community in the lead, let's talk.

GET IN TOUCH

**Partner
with us to
shape your
future.**



Transforming communities
through organizational change.

Thriving Together: CCCBSD's Purpose-Driven Transformation
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