

# Success in **Enterprise Excellence**

*Comprehensive approach based on the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence allows stakeholders to impact goals, planning and results*

## **Community Consolidated School District 93**



700+ Employees



Bloomington, Illinois



[www.ccsd93.com](http://www.ccsd93.com)

### **BEFORE THE FRAMEWORK**

CCSD93 is a pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade school district that serves roughly 3,900 students in nine schools throughout the villages of Bloomington, Carol Stream, and Hanover Park, Illinois. Before beginning its Baldrige journey in the mid 1990's, CCSD93 was the fastest growing district in Illinois, and administrators were hyper-focused on adding space and staff. The district lacked the ability to devote significant time on personnel development. As a result, CCSD93 consistently produced good students, but was not thought of as a leader in academic achievement or professional development opportunities for the staff – a challenge that needed to be addressed to retain the workforce who senior leaders hoped to develop into excellent leaders. Strategically, CCSD93 had good goals in place, but was not as competitive as it could have been and did not position itself to become the world-class district senior leaders knew it could be.

### **WHY BALDRIGE?**

In 1997, the then superintendent introduced his knowledge and awareness of the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence to the district. It was the right time for the district to identify experts in the field that could work with their district leadership and staff to create training programs and set them forth on a path to understanding and applying organizational excellence. It was clear that the opportunity to engage the framework would offer them a comprehensive approach to improvement, not just for portions of the organization or for leadership only, but across the entire district. The goal was to create a structure to understand how everyone in the organization could relate to the improvements, the strategy, and the evaluation measures the school district needed. Ultimately, Baldrige helped them develop systems and become proactive, not reactive.

### **THE JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE**

Initially CCSD93 set forth on training opportunities through the ILPEX Recognition Program (then known as the Lincoln Foundation) including the development of staff as Examiners in hopes of creating a more sophisticated internal understanding of the Baldrige Framework and its application within their organization. Upon its first ILPEX award application, CCSD93 senior leaders were disheartened when the district did not receive a site visit – a deeper dive critique of their organization and its processes. But this only fueled them to dig into the feedback report received from the evaluation team and gave them motivation to look at it from the perspective of changing the entire culture of the organization versus the mere creation of a new training program.

CCSD93 and its senior leadership took notice – the district had great programs, initiatives, and goals, but senior leaders began to network and look at other “excellent” organizations and individual that had pursued excellence. This renewed focus allowed them to realize they must address stakeholder satisfaction, from all angles, if they were to succeed.

From there the district began sharing more decision making with all stakeholders, not just staff. This resulted in the collection of a great amount of data, which led to the next question for CCSD93 – what were they to do with it? Applying the Baldrige Framework helped them to analyze the information and clearly see “what” they were doing

well so they could begin to prioritize improvements in the areas where they were not doing as well. The teams then worked to develop comprehensive scorecards, initiate regular reviews of their improvements, and ultimately track progress more effectively. Their work gradually evolved to allow their strategic plan to be based on the Framework itself.

Throughout the years, the award application process and engaging the Framework in their operations truly created a culture of continuous improvement for the organization. After being first recognized in 2007 with the Silver Award for Progress toward Excellence by the ILPEX Recognition Program, CCSD93 put their award journey on pause for nearly six years. With senior leaders leaving the organization, new leaders embarking on more fundamental training and getting themselves “up to speed,” it was important for the new leadership, and specifically the new superintendent, to sustain the progress the district had made through Baldrige and not lose sight of the Framework’s importance. Following the strict focus during that time on succession planning, the district has now committed to the pursuit of feedback from ILPEX and the award application every three to four years. This ongoing evaluation has truly helped the district build the consistency of their approach and feedback loop; because it’s not about the award for CCSD93, it’s about the journey. CCSD93 was since been awarded a Bronze Award for Commitment to Excellence in 2014 and a Silver Award for Progress toward Excellence in 2016.

## REFLECTING ON KEY LESSONS

Making it about the journey and not strictly about the award has allowed CCSD93 senior leaders to focus and ask, “What is organizational excellence and what does it mean for our district?” Applying the Framework in their organization, studying it, and reflecting on it, has helped them improve overall as a school district. In the past, many strategic goals weren’t realistic, but the Framework has helped senior leaders create a more sustainable path. Senior leaders have collected a lot of data and found comprehensive ways to evaluate the information. By utilizing baselines, data points, etc., the district has been able to set more specific, actionable, result-oriented goals. Additionally, CCSD93 has been able to evaluate and update its mission and vision with input from all stakeholder groups in alignment with the Baldrige focus on stakeholder satisfaction. CCSD93’s goals are achievable, attainable, and truly world class because senior leaders have the resources and knowledge within the Baldrige community to succeed.

## RESULTS

- Organization-wide application of quality processes and continual improvement
- Dramatic increase in stakeholder satisfaction - as a district, in 2017 they saw all-time highs in most Satisfaction Survey categories, including 11 of the 12 key Parent Satisfaction Survey areas
- Increased shared decision-making, feedback evaluation and action, and incorporation of PDSA into everyday operations
- Improved view of the district as a true part of the community through their service as leaders, role models, and environmental and philanthropic support; not just an educational organization
- Focused pursuit of student engagement including innovation, college and career readiness, and entrepreneurship
- Adoption of digital technologies across the organization

“ The professional development opportunities ILPEX provides, from the best practices conference to individual training are outstanding. Being able to network with the others on the journey is critical for our continual improvement. ILPEX provides this multitude of opportunities to keep us improving. ”

- Bill Shields, Ed.D. and Superintendent of Schools



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