

TuscBDD Department Reports

Strategic Plan | 6/2023 - 12/2023



TuscBDD Superintendent
Nate Kamban

The following information was captured from departmental highlights relating to TuscBDD's Strategic Plan. To view the plan in its entirety, please visit www.tuscbdd.org. Public feedback about the plan is welcome. To submit feedback, please email ksilverthorn@tuscbdd.org.



Theme One: Support & Empower Through Life Transitions (Phases of Life)

Partner with individuals and families to navigate various life transitions.

Objective 2 - Evaluate specific needs in each transitional period through feedback surveys and focus groups.

- Age-specific SSA caseloads achieved.
- Increased communication and outreach around transition-age youth and their families.
 - Increased website resources, met with local schools, provided informational fliers to local school districts, attended resource fairs, utilized transition-age representation in TuscBDD materials, created videos and shared via social media, increased social media posts.
- The SSA leadership team is looking into ways of assisting the youth SSAs with their ever-growing caseloads.
- Stakeholder survey data showing improved relational understanding.

Objective 3 - Develop simplified resources and processes to guide individuals and families through life transitions.

- Created a one-page document to list common transition-age services that are available at TuscBDD. Met with each school district to discuss services. Distributed the document to local school districts and social media.

Objective 4 - Continue to partner to further develop services for adults and children with intensive needs.

- TuscBDD partnered with the East Central Ohio Educational Service Center. This partnership included the addition of three classrooms, three teachers, six educational aides, two related service providers, and most importantly additional students.
- Starlight School partnered with Indian Valley to provide field trip opportunities to our students.
- The Starlight School staff worked hard to brighten up the appearance of the school. We want students to feel comfortable and happy within their learning spaces. Teachers are encouraged to decorate their classrooms and outside of the classrooms. We want student work displayed for everyone to see. We want the students to have a sense of pride and ownership of their work throughout the school.



Theme Two: Collaborate to Encourage Healthy Relationships & Broaden Services

Promote healthy relationships and seek to expand service options by collaborating with individuals and community partners.

Objective 1: Identify gaps in education and self-advocacy efforts for individuals and families served as well as providers and agency staff.

- TuscBDD advocacy council continues to identify new programs/speakers to encourage advocacy efforts.

Objective 2: Educate community and agency stakeholders on DD system.

- Nate Kamban and Kerri Silverthorn are working with members of the leadership team to identify quick and easily-accessible methods to share positive agency news.
- Ongoing efforts to increase awareness of the DD field continue. Specifically, TuscBDD staff are developing a pilot program that will increase bilingual DSPs employed in local provider agencies.

Objective 4: Continue to partner to further develop services for adults and children with intensive needs

- Both youth stabilization homes are now operational and the program is fully implemented. We have had seven children placed in the homes, and two other children have received respite services from providers in this program.
- The school is home to an after-school and weekend respite program.
- TuscBDD assisted a local provider in accessing a grant to open another after-school respite program for youth.
- The business office was able to implement a successful billing structure for Starlight School that is beneficial to the sustainability of our programs and our partner school districts.

Objective 5: Evaluate inclusivity in our community through feedback mechanisms.

- The SSAs work closely with the Employment Navigator (EN) in preparing students for the community workforce and/or linking them to services that assist in preparing them for community life.
- The Employment Navigator has and continues to build relationships with local employers/community partners providing regular monitoring of currently employed persons as well as seeking out new partners.
- A group of stakeholders served as a focus group to develop ideas to improve and increase social opportunities available for adults with disabilities. This focus group was specifically looking at the FANS Network. The group consisted of local providers, people served, TuscBDD staff, and area business personnel. A plan was developed, and implementation started in November 2023.

Objective 6: Review local service offerings and identify emerging needs.

- The Ohio Network for Innovation is now providing expanded guardianship services in Tuscarawas County. The wait time to access a guardian has been reduced.
- TuscBDD has secured approximately \$965,000 in grant funding in 2023 to support new service needs such as access to universal changing tables, support for community members who do not speak English, new sensory equipment at the Starlight School, increased EI services, a new technology first home, etc.



Theme Three: Explore System Simplification & Innovation

Identify best practices that prioritize simplification and research innovative solutions for supporting individuals and families.

Objective 1: Create a technology ambassador team to evaluate the technology and related training needs of the agency as well as individuals and families served by TuscBDD.

- TuscBDD was awarded a technology grant to further tech use in Tusc County for individuals served. The Technology First team is assisting the TuscBDD leadership team in purchasing equipment for the Technology First Home that will be launched in March 2024.

Objective 2: Ensure staff have access to technology, training, and resources to complete their responsibilities with excellence.

- The IT Director has developed a plan to update technology for staff on a rotating basis (projected for every three years).
- All TuscBDD staff were assigned two online courses through Ohio Public School Works this fall: 'Cybersecurity Awareness' and 'Email Safety: Phishing, Malware and Ransomware Awareness.'
- A playlist of TuscBDD videos was created to utilize to onboard new staff members to help them familiarize themselves with TuscBDD services.
- A sense of unity, collaboration, and teamwork has been established at Starlight School. Staff members had teambuilding opportunities and guided coaching from the principal, and everyone worked together towards the common goal/theme of 'let's grow together'. This theme embodies not only student growth but the growth of those individuals serving the students. We are all working together to create the best learning environments that provide academic rigor, individualized growth toward independence, and a conducive learning environment for all students.
- It is the goal of TuscBDD to provide a work environment that encourages employees to express themselves and enjoy their work-life balance. TuscBDD intentionally built in several opportunities for our team to bond and build unforgettable memories with their colleagues, the people we serve, and even their families: End of Summer Buddy Day, AFS Fall Festival Field Trip, Fall Fellowship Cookout, Halloween Trunk-or-Treat, Holiday Buddy Day, Country Western Holiday Dance, Coffee Wagon, Santa Shop, themed dress up days, and more!

Objective 3: Simplify resources, forms, and paperwork.

- TuscBDD and Ohio Guidestone entered a Memorandum of Understanding at the end of 2023 for our Early Intervention Service coordinators to fully utilize Brittco Software. This allows for ease of service documentation and collaboration between TuscBDD EI staff, and our EI service coordinators employed by Ohio Guidestone to more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of the families we support.
- The agency Calamity Manual and related documents that were previously stored in physical binders around the agency were moved to electronic storage accessible by authorized staff on the shared drive. The agency also eliminated the use and upkeep of an inefficient phone tree system now that the 'Call Em All' system has proven to be effective.
- Streamlined the process for providers to utilize the Provider Support Plan to simplify and add ease of use to increase provider utilization.
- TuscBDD has expanded its remote work capability by adding a new HUB Space in the SSC Building allowing a more readily accessible work area for employees. This has created more meeting space in the SSC building, allowing further options for SSAs to conduct meetings more efficiently.

Objective 4: Commit to a program of constant educational awareness for our staff so they have a larger range of knowledge and resources available.

- The superintendent shares a weekly update e-mail with all staff.