



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Piscataway Township School District

Mission Statement

The mission of the Piscataway Public Schools is to prepare students to become confident, productive members of a global society by developing each child's unique abilities in a learning environment that also includes the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Session 1

What are the Strengths, Achievements and Challenges of the Piscataway Township School District?

On October 29, 2018, Piscataway Township School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, community members and students, forty-six (46) in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening topic focused on the strengths, achievements, and challenges of the Piscataway Township School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board President, Alexandra Lopez. Ms. Teresa Rafferty, Superintendent, presented the current "State of the Schools" report. Facilitators Mary Ann Friedman, Gwen Thornton and Kathy Winecoff, from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), were introduced and provided an introduction to the strategic planning process.

We reviewed the consensus process utilized in strategic planning. The topic for the evening focused on identifying district strengths and challenges. Participants gathered in randomly assigned groups, nine groups in total, and engaged in brainstorming the districts strengths and challenges. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points, "Top 10" strengths and challenges, and presented those to the full group of meeting participants. The larger group then identified "Common Themes" that had occurred throughout the smaller groups.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district website to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

Group Consensus: Strengths, Achievements & Challenges

Dark Blue Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
A community that gives back	New generation of learners / technology
Diversity & making connections	Taking more advantage of the diversity
Commitment of faculty and staff	Cultural liaisons
Pride in athletics	Navigating services
Community events & partnerships (Pway Reads, Museum)	Marketing academic programs
Strong curricula	Tolerance of what is <u>not</u> the norm
Student involvement	Awareness of parent stressors
Behaviorists	SES diversity
	Social media / civility

Orange Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Extensive offerings	Safety & security
Great teachers / staff	Not enough parent participation
Diversity / culture	Communicating our strengths better
Relationships	Pre-school transportation
Dedication to the Arts	SAC
PTO in all schools	K-3 activities
Community programs – Education Foundation, Community Education, Coding events	Too much homework
Curriculum	High school day early
High level offerings	Honors Geometry Middle School
Academies	Building Maintenance
	Curricular changes

Purple Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Diversity of students	Communication – teacher, parent, administration
Administration listens	College Prep - Classes - timing
Mentoring Program	Academic Achievement Recognition - lower grades
Family & Community programs	Technology – curriculum, availability, equipment
AP / Academies	Mental Health Support
	Diversity of staff

Piscataway Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Dark Green Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Diversity	Technology & social media
Safety	Facilities
Teacher commitment	Overcrowding hallways & classrooms
Art & Music Programs	Underfunding
Academic & Mental Health Services	Teacher morale – needy student increase
Great community	Increased & ever changing student expectations

Light Blue Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Diversity	Lack of continuity throughout the district
Activities	Foreign Languages – keeping & retaining teachers
World Language Program	Student behavior
Compassionate staff & students	Non-College / Vocational options
Fine and Performing Arts	Continuing & build STEM offerings
Introduction of technology at young age	Better introduction of electives
	Better teacher – student communication
	Excessive technology – personal & in school

Red Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Academic opportunities	Retention of staff
Diversity	Diverse staff
Summer programs	Quality of staff (Science)
Cyber presence & communication	Partner with business, schools & colleges
Extra-curricular	Summer programs for high school (“good” students)
Security	Security
Parents	Tap into parents (resources)
	Differentiate
	Mindfulness for staff & students
	Paper report cards

Piscataway Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Black Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Music programs	Technology disparity between schools
Character Education programs	Language barrier in connecting with parents
Athletic programs	Strong partnerships with Rutgers University
Community Education programs	Need stronger partnerships with local businesses
Academic support programs	Pre-K – greater need than available space
Enrichment programs	Facilities updates needed
Pre-School	Accommodating diversity through programming
Special Needs Services	Under-funded
Mental Health Services	Parent / community participation
Full-day Kindergarten	Social media

Light Green / Fuchsia Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Supportive	More support of Arts (cheerleading & finances)
Diversity	Lack of empathy / civility
Mental Health	Technology / Social Media
Committed staff at all levels	Need for volunteers
Reputation	Staff diversity – recruitment / retention
Inclusion	Involvement of ELL families / diverse culture
Culture / Climate	Facilities
Communication	State Aid
Board of Education	

White Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Diversity	Teaching civility (mindful caring)
Character Education (developing the whole child)	Improving home environment
Extra-curricular	Community communication
	After-school activities
	Understanding cultures

Piscataway Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Following each group reporting out on their consensus points, the large group identified the following **common themes**:

- Technology
- Diversity
- Security
- Civility
- Academics
- Mindfulness
- Diverse staff
- Partnerships with Rutgers & businesses
- Volunteers
- Music
- Activities
- Pace of learning in the classroom
- Curriculum

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

**Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 7:00 pm, Piscataway HS, Cafeteria.
Sign-in begins at 6:30 pm.**

Meetings are scheduled for 1.5 hours. Meetings start and end promptly.

During the November 27th meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the Piscataway Township School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and our school district.

Please join us. Bring a friend! Everyone is welcome! We look forward to seeing you!

Please RSVP by calling *the Superintendent's Office*.