

Creating a Strategic Plan For the Garwood School District

Session 1 of 3

What Are the Strengths, Achievements, and Challenges of the Garwood School District?

On Monday, September 24, 2018, Garwood School District administration, Board of Education members, staff, parents and community members came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening's topic was focused on the strengths, achievements, and challenges of the Garwood School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board of Education President and Dr. Teresa Quigley, Superintendent, presented an excellent overview of the current "state of the schools." Gwen Thornton, a New Jersey School Boards representative, reviewed the strategic planning process the group would be undertaking.

Thirty-seven (37) participants then gathered in randomly assigned groups to identify the strengths/achievements and challenges of the Garwood School District through brainstorming and the sharing of ideas. After discussion, each group came to a consensus of its top 10 strengths/achievements and top 10 challenges and presented those to all meeting participants.

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's website to share the work of the groups during the course of the strategic planning process.

Group Consensus

Strengths/Accomplishments and Challenges

Red Dot Group:

Strengths/Accomplishments (Top Ten)

Traditions

Teachers really know and care for the students

Character education

Full Day kindergarten

Google classroom

Challenges (Top Ten)

Parent involvement

Keep traditions- add fresh ideas

Special Education advocacy group

Spanish full year; choice of another language

Addressing mental health

Ongoing teacher professional development

Preparing for increased enrollment

Meeting needs of all student abilities across the spectrum

Yellow Dot Team

Strengths/Accomplishments (Top Ten)

Role Models

Continued excellence of staff

Open door policy with administration; Supportive Administration

Family like atmosphere

Garwood School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Technology

Small class size

Facilities/Air conditioning

Financial Stability

Diversity in courses

Sports

Quickness of teacher responses

Respectful student

Community Relations

Challenges (Top Ten)

Borough development (apartments)

Financial burden of renters v. homeowners

Transition from Garwood to Clark HS

Offer multiple language

Parents getting involved/ volunteering

Higher-level classes needed

Bus- Add another bus

Replace old Chromebooks/technology

E-books / money for curriculum

Black Dot Team:

Strengths/Accomplishments (Top Ten)

Student-teacher ratio is low

Tight knit community

Nurturing environment

Excellent staff with all student needs

K-8 district fosters good relationships

Small town

After school, clubs create well-rounded students

Well-kept building- air-conditioned

Security improvements

Challenges (Top Ten):

Missing class for instrumental music

Teacher wear many hats

Limited resources

Not prepared for high school math

Elementary math challenging for parents

Unknown population increase

Keeping up with social media

Keeping up with technology in our building

Garwood School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Upkeep and ongoing maintenance of our building

Vaping/drug education

Blue Dot Team

Strengths/Accomplishments (Top 10)

Size- intimate and adaptable

Energetic staff

Extremely Flexible

Positive School climate- R E S P E C T

Opportunities to get involved

Values based instruction

Acceptance rate at UCVTS

Academic performance at ALJ

Every student matters

Air conditioning

Challenges (Top 10)

Small side-Cant offer as much

Enrollment fluctuations/new construction

How do we better use technology?

Keep current with technology professional development

Updating technology

Parent involvement

Community involvement

Facilities updates

Garwood School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Every student matters- PARCC

Maintaining budget

Green Dot Team

Strengths/Accomplishments (Top 10)

Welcoming Community

Small Town

Safe (to our ability) school environment; Air Conditioning

Teachers and staff know our children

Special Education program

Home to school communication and connection

Challenges (Top 10)

Lack of diversity-celebrate; conversation

Teacher: student ratio

Co-curricular experiences with outside community resources. Arts, Science, Finance

Grant writing-staff and volunteers

Data – not shared; need to be more data driven

More opportunities to build relationships for students with Clark; i.e. dances, activities

Following each group reporting out on their consensus points, the following **common themes emerged from multiple groups:**

Enrollment increases- New development

Technology upgrade and infusion across the curriculum/money to support

Parent Involvement

Garwood School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Budget constraints

Small size both strength and challenge

Professional development

Transitions to ALJ and UCVTS

Maintaining student teacher ratio particularly in early elementary

Social-emotional health and wellness

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Tuesday, October 9, 2018- Registration at 7:00. Meeting will begin at 7:30 pm

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

During the October 9th meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the Garwood School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and school district.

We look forward to seeing you!