



New Jersey School Boards Association

Delaware Township School District

3-R Strategic Planning

Reflect, Reimagine, Recalibrate

Facilitated by NJSBA Field Services Department

Gwen H. Thornton



The main
hope of a
nation lies
in the
education
of its
youth.

--Erasmus

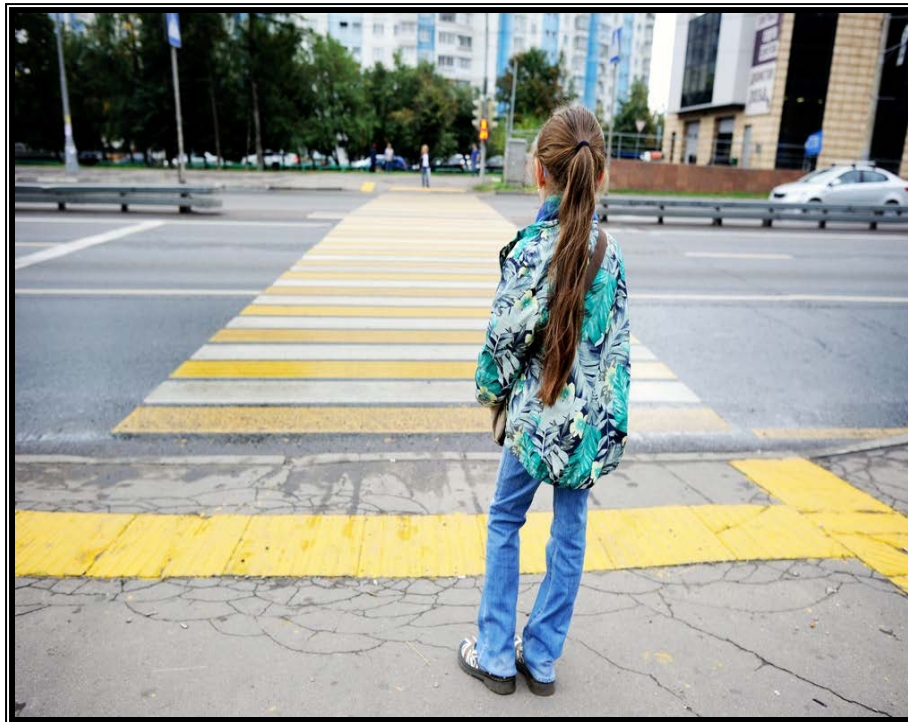


Purpose of Strategic Planning

Creating an organization-wide

Vision

--that will direct, motivate and inspire all members of the community to work together to elevate student achievement.





Advantages of Strategic Planning



Proactive, creative and flexible



Provides a forum for community participation



Continues an ongoing cycle of planning, goal setting, assessment and decision-making that will optimize limited resources and increase communications



Waterfall Effect of a Strategic Plan



From the Goals & Objectives of a Strategic Plan flow:

- District Goals
- BOE Goals
- Administrators' Goals
- Building Goals
- Department Goals
- Staff SGOs
- Staff PDPs

all of which ultimately flow into—

Student Achievement



Building A Strategic Plan





Mission Statement

- **“The mission of the Delaware Township School District is to prepare each student to become a productive, responsible member of society, able to adapt and change, by providing an environment that:**
- **Creates a foundation for a self-motivated lifelong learner by providing relevant, innovative, comprehensive curricula that reflect the New Jersey Student Learning Standards**
- **Focuses on individual needs and promotes individual excellence by encouraging and enhancing the intellectual and social development of each student**
- **This environment will be realized through an active and responsive partnership that includes the students, faculty, parents, community and staff.”**



Consensus

NJSBA's strategic planning processes work through consensus building.

Consensus is everyone:

- Sharing / Participating
 - Paraphrasing
 - Accepting

The end result may not be your 1st choice,
but you can live with it and support it!



Small Group Activity

Review task at hand

Select spokesperson for group

Begin and accomplish activity

Consensus is achieved

Spokesperson reports out for group



Group Work – 20 to 25 minutes

- You will break into **groups** by the colored dot on your name tag.



- Brainstorm** district strengths/achievements and challenges /opportunities the district faces.



Strengths	Challenges

Use the back of your agenda for scratch paper.



Strengths & Challenges Activity

Consider the strengths and challenges of the district

- Select spokesperson to report out to larger group
- Brainstorm strengths and challenges of the district
- Reach consensus on a “Top 10 List” of strengths and a “Top 10 List” of challenges and write up on poster sheet
- Each small group will report out to the larger group on their consensus “Top 10 List”
- As a large group, common themes will be identified and recorded



As you reflect- consider what we have learned in the last year or so . . .

Resiliency

Flexibility-Pivoting
Quickly

Tenacity /
Endurance

Equity

Professionalism
and commitment
of your staff and
administration

Parental
commitment to
the education of
their children

Possibilities and
limitations of
technology for
learning

Critical role that
relationships play
in the educational
process

Students'
opportunity gaps





Watch the district website for
posting of tonight's outcomes

<https://www.dtsk8.org>

Meeting #2 – Developing a Vision for the
district

Nov. 15,2021 at 7:00 pm

Meeting 3 – Development of broad goal
statements and objectives

Dec. 8,2021 at 7:00pm

(Sign-in at 6:30 pm)

DTS Strategic Planning 2021

“Preparing today’s students for tomorrow’s world”

Current State of DTS- An Overview

Presenter: Dr. R. Wiener, Superintendent
October 4, 2021 @ 7:00 pm
Performing Arts Room

Introduction

Essential question- What is beyond the horizon for DTS through 2026?

Purpose:

The primary purpose of our DTS Strategic Planning process is to gain valuable insight from multiple stakeholders to help identify:

- * areas where our district performs well
- * areas of our district's anticipated needs
- * areas for district growth over the next 3-5 years

Educational Program and Technology

DTS CIT Committee highlights

DTS continues to be designated as a 'high performing' school district by the NJDOE through the rigorous state monitoring QSAC process.

- * Student achievement analysis, Benchmark assessment, Regression identification and Summer Academy
- * SEL and Wellness efforts to incorporate and embed a variety of regular student/ staff mindfulness activities
- * Supporting/ maintaining/ enhancing a one- to- one technology device initiative and district vision that are developmentally appropriate and will remain state of the art. Continued emphasis on increased embedded STEM opportunities for all students

Finance and Facilities

DTS F/F Committee highlights

State audits have continued to determine that DTS finances are well positioned for long term stability through effective planning and fiscally responsible cost containment /spending. The DTS Business Office has been commended by the auditors for administering an efficient and effective program with proper financial controls.

- * Sustainable Schools/ Green Initiative efforts
- * Funding - successful Referendum, School Choice, healthy maintenance reserve and capital accounts, managing enrollment/ state and adjustment aid, etc.
- * Highly successful annual district audits highlighting effective and efficient long term financial planning including successful partial funding of recent facilities upgrades including our HVAC systems

Human Resources/ Community Relation

DTS Personnel/ Policy Committee highlights

DTS continues to excel in staffing our building to meet the changing needs of our students and educational programs.

- * Staffing and Administrative Restructure- successful administrative restructure/ principal search conducted to respond to the changing needs of the district, small class sizes prioritized in primary grades
- * Communication Counts! ongoing efforts- increasing Social Media footprint, implementing DTS Newsletter including multiple stakeholders, virtual Board meetings, etc.
- * Initiating the Blue Ribbon Schools process to be considered by the NJDOE for statewide nomination. (2-year process)

Thank you

Our DTS Board and Administration would like to thank all participants for donating their time and feedback to help provide valuable insight in creating a future 'DTS Blueprint for Success' over the next 3-5 years.

2021-22 DTS Board Committee Areas of Focus

Blue Ribbon exploration- CIT

Green/ Sustainability Initiatives- F/F

Strategic Planning- P/P

Dr. R. Wiener, Superintendent

rwiener@dtssk8nj.org

Mrs. C. Pouria, Board Of Education President

catherinepouriaboe@dtssk8nj.org



Creating a Strategic Plan- Meeting #1 for the Delaware Township School District

Mission Statement

- **“The mission of the Delaware Township School District is to prepare each student to become a productive, responsible member of society, able to adapt and change, by providing an environment that:
Creates a foundation for a self-motivated lifelong learner by providing relevant, innovative, comprehensive curricula that reflect the New Jersey Student Learning Standards
Focuses on individual needs and promotes individual excellence by encouraging and enhancing the intellectual and social development of each student
This environment will be realized through an active and responsive partnership that includes the students, faculty, parents, community and staff.”**

Session 1

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

On October 4, 2021, Delaware Township School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, and community members, twenty- three in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening focused on the strengths and challenges of the Delaware Township School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board President, Catherine Pouria. Dr. Richard Weiner, Superintendent, presented the current “State of the Schools” report. Facilitator Gwen Thornton, from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), was 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, four 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,

Delaware Township / District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

and presented those to the full group of meeting participants. The larger group then briefly identified “Common Themes” that emerged through the group work.

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

Green Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Teacher experience	Keeping up to PD
Small class sizes	Keeping up with technology
Financial stability	Equality and diversity
Highly engaged students	Website design
Well-maintained facility	Sports, competitions against other schools (size)
Community involvement	“Old ways” vs. “new ways”
Family oriented culture	New family outreach (buddies)
K-8 (all students together)	Family nights
Students prepared for HRHS	
Up-to-date technology	

Red Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Generational community: families stay/return	Inclusion-no “easy in” for new people; hard on introverted parents-like asking someone on a date
Small classes/community	Lack of diversity-broadening horizons; compensate for lack of diversity; provide exposure to different abilities, cultural differences
Teacher experiences so positive, families return	Homogenous-bilateral community
Continuity	Accommodating a variety of experiences
Community involvement, inclusion; kindness	Small size-offer opportunities that a bigger school could offer; district consolidation?
Strong mental health and wellness supports	Stagnant growth? Good? Bad? District consolidation???
Welcoming when engaging with the community	Can summer academy be sustained without state aid?

Delaware Township / District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Small district-1 school to take care of	Showcasing our curriculum-what does our school do?
Summer Academy	Build more outdoor, experiential opportunities for students; climate change, sustainability, responsible use of resources
Full day PreK and Kindergarten; quality after school care	State Aid

Blue Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Our students	Mental Health-stressing rising problems, screen time-alternatives needed
Maintaining small class sizes	Child Study Team-turnover and stability
Supportive community, families and teachers	Food needs improvement- Want fresh option Use gardens to supplement (Quality, freshness check)
Safe School	Size of sports teams-competitiveness; 4- fall, 2- winter, 2-spring
School maintenance	Administrative Budget
Building/location	Standards for virtual learning; time/PD needed/support groups/best practices
The teachers	Transportation-2 busses/drivers?
Applied Tech program	Rigor of curriculum-What's missing since pandemic?
SEL program	Projecting growth accurately-funding
Mrs. Lally	Choice funding
Sustainability initiatives	

Black Dot Group

Strengths	Challenges
Dedicated staff and teachers	Need for increased exposure to diversity and culture
Small Class Size	Enrollment
Flexibility	Increase in sharing services (regionalization)
Availability of resources	Communication
Facility maintenance	Welcoming new families
Extra-curricular	Environmental challenges
Desire to continue to improve	More professional development to stay current with educational practices
Individual attention	Pace of change

Delaware Township / District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Community involvement	Supporting families
Multi-generational	Special education services

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

- **Our strengths are also our challenges**
 - Small class sizes, excellent teacher, engaged parents and community
 - Safe, well-maintained facility
 - SEL/mental health and wellness supports
 - Sustainability initiatives
 - Need for increased exposure to diversity and cultural awareness
 - State aid/enrollment/shared services
 - Technology and PD expansion
 - Opportunities for co-curricular experiences
 - Welcoming new families/inclusion

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

**Monday, November 15, 2021, at 7:00 pm,
Sign-in begins at 6:45 pm.**

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

During the November 15th meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the Delaware Township School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and 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*.



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Delaware Township School District

Mission Statement

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Creates a foundation for a self-motivated lifelong learner by providing relevant, innovative, comprehensive curricula that reflect the New Jersey Student Learning Standards Focuses on individual needs and promotes individual excellence by encouraging and enhancing the intellectual and social development of each student This environment will be realized through an active and responsive partnership that includes the students, faculty, parents, community and staff.”

Session 2

Creating a Vision & Initiative for the Delaware Township School District?

On November 15, 2021, Delaware Township School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, town council members and community members, eighteen (18) in all, came together to continue the strategic planning initiative. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board President, Catherine Pouria and Dr. Richard Weiner, Superintendent. Facilitator Gwen Thornton, from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), was introduced and provided an introduction to the strategic planning process.

The consensus process utilized in strategic planning was reviewed. The topic for the evening focused on creating a shared vision for the Delaware Township School District. Participants were asked to picture themselves, having been away from the district for 5 years, returning to Delaware Township and finding an article on their school on Google. The article was about Schools that Succeed. In addition to the current programs already in place in the Delaware Township School District, what programs/services/curriculum/student outcomes/best practices/facilities would you expect to see in your schools that are succeeding? Participants were encouraged to think “big picture.”

Participants gathered in randomly assigned groups, four groups in total, to develop a shared vision and initiatives. The small groups reviewed the outcomes from Meeting #1, strengths and challenges, and then began brainstorming on their vision for the district. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points and presented those to the full group of 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 website to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

Group Consensus: Vision & Initiatives

Red Dot Group 1:

“Small School Makes Big Impact ”

Initiatives:

1. School being hub for community
2. Technology and creativity promoting innovation
3. SEL – 2 Counselors
4. Use outdoor space
5. Bring in speakers (community reps – future jobs)

Green Dot Group 2:

“DTA Students Receive International Forward Learners Award. We’re Going to Geneva!”

Initiatives:

1. Students and school community support sustainability
2. Digital literacy is demonstrated through authentic learning practices
3. Global and cultural awareness is embedded in curriculum and daily practices to foster appreciation for diversity
4. We will prioritize SEL in our school and community
5. Through the visions our students will become empowered members of our community

Orange Dot Group 3:

“Small School, Small Footprint, Big Impact”

Initiatives:

1. Maintain class size and high quality of education
2. Incorporate sustainability in all aspects of student life
3. Recruiting high quality staff
4. Actively using up to date technology to enhance education and prepare for the future.
5. Fully integrating broad world views to all parts of the curriculum
6. Provide opportunities to explore different career paths equally
7. Develop deep problem-solving and study skills to enhance students’ success

Purple Dot Group 4:
“Upstanders Make Outstanding Citizens at DTS”

Initiatives:

1. Engaged citizenship at school, town, country and planet levels
2. Encourage volunteerism, community engagement, civic awareness and involvement
3. Active participation in local initiatives – Science/STEM/Sustainability
4. Blue Ribbon School
5. School of Character

Following each small group’s reporting out to the larger group, the following **Five Goal Areas** were identified by the large group:

1. **Sustainability**
2. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Respect**
 - a. **Bringing in outside speakers (community reps, future jobs)**
3. **Social-Emotional Learning**
4. **Fostering a Sense of Civic Responsibility**
5. **Preparation for the Future**
 - a. **Digital Literacy, STEAM and Technology**
 - b. **Alternative Pathways**

During the **December 8th** meeting participants will develop goals and objectives, for each goal area, that will guide Delaware Township School District for the next several years.

The third strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Monday, December 8, 2021, at 7:00 pm,
Sign-in begins at 6:30 pm.

Meetings start and end promptly.

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

Please RSVP by responding to the Google invitation!



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Delaware Township School District

Mission Statement

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Meeting# 3 Developing Strategic Planning Goals & Objectives

On December 8, 2021, Delaware Township School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents and community members, eleven (11) in all, came together for the district’s strategic planning initiative. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board President, Catherine Pouria. Facilitator Gwen Thornton from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) was introduced and provided an introduction to the strategic planning process.

We began the evening with a review of the strategic planning process and consensus building. Copies of the outcomes from meetings 1 & 2, along with goal areas were provided for each participant.

The activity for the December 8, 2021, meeting was to develop goal statements and objectives for each of the five goal areas identified at the second meeting.

Participants selected the Goal Area in which they wished to participate, five groups in all. The small groups reviewed the outcomes from Meeting #1, strengths and challenges, and Meeting #2, vision and initiatives and then began brainstorming on strategies, objectives and ultimately the formulation of goal statements. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points and presented those to the full group of 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 website to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

Group Consensus: Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal #1: Sustainability

Goal Statement: To build an environmentally resilient community through a sustainability program that fosters respect and responsibility for the preservation of our planet's resources while ensuring a safe, economic and educationally productive atmosphere for our students.

Objectives:

1. Protection of students, staff and our community from environmental damage through the elimination of harmful substances.
2. Encouragement of safe and responsible green practices
3. Provision of high-quality education that supports concepts and practices of environmental, social and economic responsibility and sustainability.
4. Adoption of operational practices that balance environmental, social and fiscal responsibility to protect and enhance the future quality of life.

Goal #2: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Respect

Goal Statement: To increase the awareness and an appreciation of diverse perspectives and welcome all who are different or who hold differing opinions, so that our students are prepared to contribute to a diverse workforce and appreciate the value of societal differences as imperative to a life well-lived.

Objectives:

1. Global and cultural awareness is embedded in curriculum and daily practices to foster appreciation for diversity.
2. Expand new family outreach.
3. Provide exposure to different cultures, languages, customs and societal norms.

Goal #3: Social-Emotional Learning

Goal Statement: To ensure the safety and wellness of our students by expanding needed mental health supports as needed and continuing to integrate social emotional learning opportunities across the curriculum to support all students

Objectives:

1. To recognize and celebrate academic successes of all students as they work to reach their individual potential
2. Provide professional development to assist teachers in supporting students in their social emotional growth and academic achievement.
3. Explore the feasibility of adding additional counselors
4. Encourage and support student agency and self-reflection

Goal #4: Fostering a Sense of Civic Responsibility

Goal Statement: To create a productive and engaged citizenry in our community of learners by fostering civic responsibilities

Objectives:

1. To focus on activities and learning that supports an engaged citizenship at school, in our town, country and world.
2. To encourage volunteerism, community engagement, civic awareness and involvement.
3. To implement school-wide modeling of civic processes, institutions and organizations.

Goal #5: Preparation for the Future

- a. Digital Literacy, STEAM and Technology.
- b. Alternate Pathways for students

Goal Statement: To instill an openness and flexibility to new ideas and learning opportunities to prepare our students for the future.

Objectives:

1. Actively use up to date technology to enhance education and prepare for the future
2. Increase professional development in identified areas of need.
3. Provide equitable opportunities for all students to explore different career paths.
4. Expansion of authentic learning practices to support academic literacy

5. Incorporation of STEAM in all subjects/curricular areas

Next Steps

The Superintendent / Administrative Team will develop action plans to implement the vision and goals developed in the 3R Strategic Plan. The action plans will include:

1. The actions necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives
2. Select measures for accountability
3. Resources required
4. A timeline for implementation
5. Indicators of success

All participants will be invited to attend the board meeting, date to be determined, when the final strategic plan will be presented to the Board of Education by Gwen Thornton, NJSBA, Field Service Representative.

Thank you to all of the participants who gave of their time, energy and talents to contribute to the strategic plan for the Delaware Township School District! It has been a pleasure to work with you.