



Creating a Strategic Plan for Denville Township Schools

Mission Statement

The Denville School District's mission is to educate and empower all students to excel.

Session 1 of 3 - What are the Strengths/Accomplishments and Challenges/Opportunities of the Denville Township Schools?

On January 12, 2017 Denville Township School District administrators, staff, Board members, parents, and community members came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening's topic focused on the strengths/accomplishments, and challenges/opportunities of the Denville Township Schools. The meeting began with welcoming remarks by Dino Cappello, President of the Board of Education. Steven Forte, Superintendent, provided an informative overview of the district. Facilitators Charlene Peterson and Kathy Helewa, from New Jersey School Boards Association, introduced the strategic planning process and assisted throughout the process.

Approximately 70 participants gathered in eight randomly assigned groups to identify the strengths/accomplishments and challenges/opportunities of the Denville Township Schools through brainstorming and the sharing of ideas. After discussion, each group came to a consensus on its top 10 strengths/accomplishments and top 10 challenges/opportunities and presented those to the full group of meeting participants.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. All consensus points are recorded and posted on the district's website (www.denville.org) to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

Denville Township Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Group Consensus: Strengths/Accomplishments & Challenges/Opportunities

Orange Dot Group:

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Student Success Academy, Peer Place Tutoring is improvement in supports offered compared to past	Offer more programs or additional help for the middle (student needing a little help)
Cooperative learning is happening	Field conditions are poor
Teacher evaluation and data help improve instruction and student growth	Need to educate students in interpersonal skills
Good that trailers are not used for regular classrooms	Would like increase in inter-disciplinary projects
Denville has offered Parent Academy	Lower Math scores
	Increase in students qualifying for free and reduced lunch
	New Math a challenge for parents to help their children
	Space issues – ability to accommodate programs

Red Dot Group:

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Great community involvement	Space: Trailers, Cafeterias, 4 th & 5 th grade music in trailers. Bathrooms not for PreK & K
Teachers invested	Educational roadmap K-12
Advance course offerings	Adding more Advance classes and opportunities
Progressing well with Security	Security – police officer in each school, buzz in and check each time during and after school
Technology	Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional well being – problem • School Climate • Switch it up days
	Tailor personality traits and multiple intelligences for instruction

Green Dot Group:

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Teachers and staff	Arts budget
Professional Development (except technology)	Technology and curriculum pairing
Community volunteers (PTA)	Health curriculum update
Security	Expo and G&T programs (top 15%)
Well maintained schools	Class size (physical)
Cultural Arts programs	Horizontal and vertical curriculum integration

Denville Township Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

	Diversity and cultural competency
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Black Dot Group:

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Inclusion is adequately supported	Foreign languages younger – more consistent at the middle school
Technology - supported	More classroom space – to decrease class size
Professional Development for all staff - quality	Keeping up with technology
Supportive educational community	Low state aid
Meaningful homework	Unfunded mandates
Standards-based report card	Better organization of after school activities – scheduling (middle school level)
Strong faculty	Parent education
	Meaningful homework (maintaining)

Gold Star Group:

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Strong academic support and intervention	Recognize the change of the family unit
Exceptional support for staff/teachers/students parents	Educational space/additional staffing space
Community involvement – as families needs change, the district continues to change and evolve to meet these changes and needs	Evaluate the balance of cycles and class schedules in order to offer more selective and inclusive opportunities for students
Well received and successful mentorship program at Lakeview/Riverview	Community awareness and concern for students' safety
Parental satisfaction level of child's educational experience and results	Balancing the whole child: emotional and social learning
Quality of staff is exceptional (parent perspective)	Security upgrades
	Extend the inclusion program for PreK
	Communication to community

Blue Dot Group

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Honors classes at middle school	Inequity between schools (size)
Using technology at all levels (student/parent, i.e. Google Classroom)	Discrepancies in school/teacher practices and implementation of curriculum
Work on Character Development	Start time for Valleyview (early?)
Start time	Continue to improve/integrate use of technology in the classroom and at home
Strength of writing program	Expansion of world language in elementary school? (earlier/more/Latin?)
Use of proper academic language	Expand facilities?
Teacher's ability to identify students' needs	Continue to offer enrichment opportunities (expand on)
Strong reputation	

Denville Township Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Grants available to teachers	
Positive transportation staff morale	

Pink Dot Group

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Well prepared students at high school level – Art of Writing has been a huge help	Access to technology for <u>all</u> students as far as printing and lack of Wi-Fi
Issues get addressed quickly	Monies possibly should be spent on school lunches that are subsidized. Some monies go toward technology more so
Dedicated staff	Make facilities work for what we need
Technology advances	Lagging in Math
Post Sandy Hook security amazing	Non-profits collaboration with the district
Bus staff incredible	
More periods of Math	
Implementing computer use for PARCC	
Love of Math in students	

Yellow Dot Group

Strengths/Accomplishments	Challenges/Opportunities
Teachers/Administrators – long term	COAH
Good Programs	Class Sizes (too big @ LV)
PreK	Class Space (building)
Technology – good start	Follow-up of PreK into other grades
Overall Professional Development	Transitional Kindergarten
	Technology – continue growth
	Age-appropriate times assessments
	Training/Feedback in New Programs aligned with Curriculum

As part of the discussion, it was mentioned that www.givetechnology.org is a community resource that repurposes technology for those in need.

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Thursday, February 9, 2017 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Valleyview Middle School Cafeteria.

During the February 9th meeting, using a similar brainstorming process, we will identify our visions for the Denville Township Schools five years from now.

The final meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 pm to write goal statements using the input from the two previous sessions.

Please join us. Everyone is welcome, even if you were not able to attend the first meeting. We look forward to seeing you!