



# **Creating a Strategic Plan For the Rahway School District**

## **Session 1 of 3**

### **What Are the Strengths, Achievements, and Challenges of the Rahway School District?**

On January 18, 2018, Rahway 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 Rahway School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introductions by Board of Education President and Dr. Patricia Camp, Superintendent, presented an excellent overview of the current "state of the schools." Gwen Thornton, assisted by Maryann Friedman New Jersey School Boards representatives, reviewed the strategic planning process the group would be undertaking.

Fifty-one (51) participants then gathered in randomly assigned groups to identify the strengths/achievements and challenges of the Rahway 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**

#### **Orange Dot Group:**

##### **Strengths/Accomplishments (Top Ten)**

- Passion of staff and community
- Diversity of student population / acceptance / inclusion / engagement
- Arts program - performing and visual (ES & HS)
- Athletic program
- Teachers and staff
- PreK (all day and Kindergarten)
- Extracurricular activities
- Service and clubs
- Kindness of students
- Leadership – parent & staff leadership

##### **Challenges (Top Ten)**

- Supporting LEP families
- Engaging parents / communities
- School crowding (elementary level)
- Variety of measurements to show growth
- Inspiring / motivating students
- Identifying / supporting students with challenges (Elementary)
- Maximize human capital
- Aesthetics / Facilities
- Course Offerings / Opportunities for expression
- Better overall communication

#### **Green Dot Team**

##### **Strengths/Accomplishments (Top Ten)**

- Full day Pre-K
- Creativity
- Community involvement

## ***Rahway School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes***

- Talented and committed staff
- Rising Stars Program & marketing plan
- Science program / scores
- HS Student of the Month
- HS Student Leadership program
- Arts program at the HS
- HS Athletics
- Professional development for some staff involves college and/or corporate partners

### **Challenges (Top Ten)**

- Lack of language programs
- Communication
- Unequal resources for schools (e.g., clubs)
- Parent involvement (Hispanic)
- Volunteer access
- Athletic opportunities at elementary level
- SPED resources for those without behavioral challenges (individual plans)
- Preschool growth greater than district facilities
- College counselors need more support

### **Red Dot Team:**

#### **Strengths/Accomplishments (Top Ten)**

- Students
- Staff
- Community Partnerships
- Community engagement
- Diversity
- Technology
- Performing Arts
- Sports & Extracurricular
- AP program at HS
- Celebrations of student and staff success

#### **Challenges:**

## ***Rahway School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes***

- Literacy
- Family supports
- Transiency
- Funding
- Staffing – Bilingual & WL
- Vertical curriculum alignment
- Technology
- Least restrictive environment
- PD – finding time and finances
- At Risk students

### **Black Dot Team**

#### **Strengths/Accomplishments (Top 10)**

- Diversity
- Students
- Small community with city benefits
- Educators
- Community involvement
- Athletics
- Arts Program
- AP Program
- Special Needs Programs
- Professional Development
- Post-Secondary Education Preparation

#### **Challenges (Top 10)**

- Attendance / Tardiness
- Parental Involvement (Quantity)
- Disconnect of the ELL community
- Lack of communication (has improved though)
- Image
- Lack of funding (state & federal)
- Over-dependence on local property taxes

## ***Rahway School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes***

- Facilities
- Test Scores
- Over-abundance of standardized testing
- Student confidence
- Preparing 1<sup>st</sup> generation college bound students
- Branding

### **Blue Dot Team**

#### **Strengths/Accomplishments (Top 10)**

- Use of social media
- Willingness to try new programs
- Full-day PreK
- The Arts
- Diversity
- Power school / Google Classroom
- Local library
- Community support & activities
- Teachers and staff
- Tutoring – HS students tutor along with NHS
- Rutgers Future Scholars
- Guest speakers

#### **Challenges (Top 10)**

- Rutgers Future Scholars
- Scheduling
- PTA
- Parent involvement
- Phone obsession
- Culture and expectation of our youth
- Funding – trips, too much fund-raising
- Careers – having kids start very early about what they want to do

## ***Rahway School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes***

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

- Diversity
- Inclusiveness
- Arts program
- Sports
- Parent involvement
- Funding
- Full Day PreK & K
- Technology
- Facilities – upgrades / maintenance
- Communication
- PD
- Dedication of staff
- Bilingual & World Language

**The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:**

Monday, February 5, 2018 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM

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

During the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the Rahway School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and school district.

We look forward to seeing you!