



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Roxbury Township School District

Mission Statement

The Roxbury Township Public Schools, a dynamic and thriving district, in partnership with a supportive and collaborative community, inspires and empowers all learners to flourish as ethical and global citizens in the 21st century.

Session 1 of 3

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

On January 28, 2014, Roxbury 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 Roxbury Township School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introductions by Board of Education President, Theresa D'Agostino. Dr. Patrick Tierney, Superintendent, presented an excellent overview of the current "state of the schools." Charlene Peterson, assisted by Al Annunziata, New Jersey School Boards representatives, reviewed the strategic planning process the group would be undertaking.

Just under 50 participants then gathered in four randomly assigned groups to identify the strengths/achievements and challenges of the Roxbury Township 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

Green Team:

Strengths/Accomplishments

- Special Education Programs – early identification and transition
- Huge infusion of technology
- Large amount of staff training
- Enrollment of students from outside districts
- Positive relationship between administration and staff
- Diversity of population
- Character Education
- Focused and cohesive Board of Education
- Educators that keep a positive attitude
- Safety and security

Challenges

- Declining enrollment
- Diversity in population
- Safety and security
- Fenimore landfill
- Changing technology

Blue Team

Strengths/Accomplishments

- Community
- Caring teachers
- Graduation rates
- Students
- Special education programming
- In-district professional development
- Overwhelmingly positive morale across the educational community (Board of Education, students, parents, teachers, staff, admin, etc.)
- Proactive leadership
- Focus on positive and growth
- Civic responsibility/outreach

Challenges

- Lack of awareness within the community without children in the schools

Roxbury Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

- Same students continue to miss introduction of new programs
- Changing face of technology
- Working with “working parents” so students can benefit from extra programming
- Need full day kindergarten
- Mandates and financial/human resources drain
- Equity (ties to same students continue to miss introduction of new programs)
- Student perception of achievement – aiming for above the bar
- Getting buy-in from private investors.

Red Team:

Strengths/Accomplishments

- Teachers nurturing and supportive
- Teachers committed to professional development
- Commitment to improvement by all stakeholders
- Rebuilding and adding facilities and programs
- Positive environment
- Collaborative meeting opportunities
- Visionary leadership
- Technology resources
- Caring community – cooperative
- Administration on top of new requirements
- Strong arts program

Challenges

- More students lead learning
- Bring STEAM to Roxbury (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math + Art
- Maximizing use of technology in classrooms (teacher training) – learning and creative uses
- Programs that meet needs of a range of abilities within one program structure. In-service teacher support.
- Challenging higher learners (e.g. college level – online learning)
- Time
- Money
- State mandates
- Breeding creativity

Yellow Team:

Strengths/Accomplishments (Top 10)

- Progressive – technology and curriculum
- Choice district
- Extra-curricular activities and sports

Roxbury Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

- Website improved – technology
- Committed staff – resilient and receptive to change
- Roxbury High School – top 100!
- Strong staff – school climate
- Class size – number of students and space
- Security
- Children-family support (majority)

Other Strengths/Accomplishments Identified

- Morale upswing – everywhere
- Improvements in facilities
- Strong community – staff
- Continuing education support
- Open communication – community and schools
- Administration team support and vision
- Parent involvement
- Open minded
- Breakdown of buildings
- Community school

Challenges (Top 10)

- Enrollment dropping
- Finance – books – access – shortage
- Uniform elementary curricula – programs – standard elementary experience – uniform (Mt. Arlington)
- Special needs
- Standardized tests – overdone and prepared? Keyboarding skills for computer testing.
- Mental health support – more? Guidance
- Older buildings – large buildings
- Doing more with less
- Environmental concerns – dump
- Half-day kindergarten versus full-day kindergarten

Other Challenges Identified

- Grounds – maintenance
- Gap between state methods and school
- Outdoor time – some unstructured time – play
- Faculty attrition

Roxbury Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Tuesday, February 25, 2014 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM at the Lincoln/Roosevelt School Auditorium, 34 North Hillside Avenue, Succasunna.

During the February meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the Roxbury School District. We will talk about our future aspirations and expectations for our students and school district.

Please join us. Everyone is welcome.

We look forward to seeing you!