

Strategic Planning Notes  
April 4, 2017

Each of the 29 members in attendance introduced themselves. After the brief introduction, a review of strategic planning was provided. The District would be working on a 5 year strategic plan; however, it will not be written in terms of year 1, year 2, year 3, etc. It will be written as "within 5 years". (Presenter's ppt. is posted online.)

Alan Schwager, Woolwich Township Mayor  
Matthew Blake, Woolwich Director of Community Development

Mayor Alan Schwager spoke briefly about the history of the schools in the township. Matthew Blake then walked the group through some of the newer developments in the town and discussed projected/anticipated building projects. The group discussed Eagle View Trail which will provide approximately 80 apartment units. The group was informed that every municipality has an obligation to meet affordable housing. Mr. Blake also discussed the 20 acres that is now promised for passive/active open space. When asked if the new housing projects could be refused, it was stated that the Township doesn't have the legal authority to stop it; however, the best we can do is plan for it.

Alice O'Blennis, Swedesboro Councilwoman

Ms. O'Blennis discussed how Swedesboro's focus is different because the Borough is land locked. Their focus now is to support, maintain, and preserve. Swedesboro's main focus is through the economic development committee which is very active. Recently, they have been discussing establishing better communication throughout Swedesboro, and there is a plan to begin to develop their own newsletter. Swedesboro is also entertaining the thought of developing internship opportunities at the college level. Ms. O'Blennis discussed how Swedesboro is going to be one of the sites of the future Fossil Park. Swedesboro is also looking to add new events in June/July/August with food trucks, and there will be a Harry Potter event in the fall. Currently, Swedesboro is putting their efforts into Fair Funding.

Dr. Kristin P. O'Neil, Swedesboro-Woolwich Superintendent

Each member of the committee was presented with a binder full of District information: enrollment trends, assessment trends, communication examples from both in-house and to the community, and Board of Education Goals. Dr. O'Neil also presented a ppt. overview of the work that had taken place over the past year and a half. (Presenter's ppt. is posted online.) The ppt. explained the contents of the binder and reviewed the District's progress in the following areas: safety and security, District accomplishments, District improvements, and new additions in programming and student clubs. Dr. O'Neil discussed the evidence tables that are

provided to Districts after the PARCC results are received and discussed how that data can be used to improve curriculum and instruction.

Dr. Raymond Bandlow, Strategic Planning Consultant

Dr. Bandlow presented several critical questions that were created by the previous session with the Board of Education and Administration.

- What are the top 3 - 5 non-negotiable focus areas?
- How do we prioritize our “big ideas?”
- What qualities and characteristics does a successful 21st century Swedesboro-Woolwich student embody?
- 5 years from now, does the community believe that they are getting educational value for their tax dollars?
- How do we evaluate the implementation of our “big ideas” for success or failure?
- How do we fund our “big ideas?”
- How do we maintain our current level of quality instruction and instructors in spite of unknowns and flat funding?
- 5 years from now, did our Strategic Plan (developed in 2017) work?
- 5 years from now, what happens if there is another housing boom?
- How can we use learning analytics?
- How can we engage students to facilitate higher levels of achievement for learners?

Each of the six groups worked together to select 3 - 5 of those questions as the most critical or to add questions that they feel should be considered to be a critical question for this process. The groups recorded their answers and reported out.

- (4x) How do we fund our big ideas?
  - ◆How do we maintain our current level of quality instruction and instructors in spite of flat funding?
- (2x) What are our 3 - 5 non-negotiables?
  - ◆How do we prioritize our big ideas?
- What do we want all of our students to be at the end of their SWSD experience?
  - ◆How do we meet and maintain community educational expectations?
  - ◆Does the community believe that they are getting educational value for their tax dollars?
  - ◆Qualities and characteristics of a successful SW 21st century learner?
- How can we use learning analytics?

- How do we communicate our District's story to community members who are not parents of current students?
- How do we get community members and families more involved in our schools?
- Did our plan work?
- How do we gain higher levels of achievement through vertical and horizontal alignment?
- How do we increase student engagement with opportunities both during and after school hours?

The session closed with a review of a vision statement. The group was asked to think about words that should be included in our vision statement and come prepared to share at the next meeting.

The following Wordle was shared with words that were generated during the Board of Education and Administrative session on Strategic Planning.

