

Creating a Strategic Plan for the Bethlehem Township School District

Session 1 of 3

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

On January 30, 2018, Bethlehem Township 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 Bethlehem School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introductions by Board of Education President, Kimberly Solino, and Dr. Gregory Farley, Superintendent, presented an excellent overview of the current "state of the schools." Mayor Paul Muir, and the Teacher's Association President also greeted the attendees. Gwen Thornton, assisted by Maryann Friedman New Jersey School Boards representatives, reviewed the strategic planning process the group would be undertaking.

Twenty-one (21) participants then gathered in randomly assigned groups to identify the strengths/achievements and challenges of the Bethlehem 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 Dot Team

Strengths / Accomplishments (Top Ten)

- Caring competent staff
- Character education
- Broad array of activities (sports, clubs)
- District size – student centered, strong school / community relationships
- L-E-A-D program
- Strong curriculum – state of art programming
- Technology integration

Challenges (Top Ten)

- No community – social “center”
- Dual income family financially necessary
- Concern for children’s opportunity for exposure to negative influences
- Declining enrollment is it a natural cycle that will turn?
- Maintain independent status for district operations
- Staffing impact
- Programming upgrade costs

Red Dot Team:

Strengths / Accomplishments (Top Ten)

- Community
- Student / teacher ratio
- Quality of education
- After-school activities
- Coaches
- PTA
- Water fountains
- Lunch food options

Bethlehem Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Challenges:

- Enrollment (\$)
- Security
- Discipline (inconsistent)
- Communication (Conley)
 - Principal
 - Nurse
- Athletic fields
 - Non-existent
- Time for lunch
- Orientation into Hoppock
- Homework – inconsistent
 - Same grades have different homework
- Parent / Teacher Conferences

Blue Dot Team

Strengths / Accomplishments (Top 10)

- Current ranking and competitive strength as a district
- Full-day Kindergarten
- Transportation
- Activities / Sports
- Summer camps
- Pre-school
- Flex hours
- 1-1 tech
- Wireless
- Clubs
- Food services
- Quality teachers

Challenges (Top 10)

- Declining enrollment
- Special ed program maintaining
- Staff health care costs
- Safety Unfunded mandates
- Attracting families
- Maintaining programming
- Staying up with the latest IT / tech
- Calendar

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

- Size = strength and challenge
- Quality staff
- Ed program and technology
- Clubs & sports
- Community
- Facilities = strength and challenge
- Safety & security
- IT & tech = strength and challenge
- Quality of education
- Special education \$\$

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Monday, February 26, 2018 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM –

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

During the February 26th meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the Bethlehem Township School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and school district.

Bethlehem Township School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

We look forward to seeing you!