



Strategic Plan 2017-2022

Hillsborough Township

Vision: Learning empowers life beyond Hillsborough School District

Mission: To provide a superior education for all students so they will lead us successfully and responsibly into the future

Strategic Imperative	Maximize College Readiness	Maximize Career Readiness	Provide Optimal Early Childhood Education	Individualize Learning Opportunities	Enhance Student Life
Key Initiatives	HS academies STEM grades 5-8	HS Vocational-Technical	Explore full day K Explore expanded pre-K	Close achievement gap Individualize course of study	Expand facilities Embed love-of-learning ethos
Program	HS academies Block schedule Dual enrollment for college credit Fine and performing arts STEM grades K-4	Vocational track Commercial track Internships	Developmental Readiness	Cross-disciplinary and innovative curriculum Enhanced Gifted & Talented	More world language options Explore foreign exchange
Staff	Match skills to foci	Expand vocational personnel	Enhance developmental identification	Explore class size reduction	Embed critical thinking, resilience, independence Mental health Performing arts center
Facilities	New high school Reconfigure schools Correct imbalances	New high school with vocational facilities	Identify facility requirements for full day K and pre-K	Flexible teaching & learning work space	Improve athletic fields Long course pool Explore A/C for all schools
Technology	Integrated infrastructure & work stations	Vocational equipment & software	Age-appropriate Technology	Explore online Courses Increase virtual interactions	Sustain one-to-one initiative
Finance	Financial planning for new high school	Financial planning for new high school	Explore tuition-based programs	Explore municipal & county partnerships	Increase revenue generating capacity

Purposes: Financial Independence — Equal Opportunity — Self-Actualization

Hillsborough Township School District Strategic Plan 2017-2022



INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Though the Hillsborough Township schools rank among the best in the state and best in the nation as well, the Board of Education, in the 2015-2016 school year, initiated a process of continuous improvement to ensure that programs, services, and facilities not only meet the needs of diverse students and community, but do so at the highest level. Toward that end, the Board engaged stakeholders to define strategic directions that will shape and guide the development of programs, services, and facilities for the next five years. Initial meetings in the planning process included representatives of various stakeholder groups drawn from the Hillsborough Township School District and from the larger Hillsborough community.

The following introduction summarizes results of an initial meeting with the Board of district administrators and three community/forums conducted over several planning sessions. Community/staff forums reflected diversity of opinion and positions regarding the current status and future of the Hillsborough Township School District and articulated their best thinking regarding the current and future direction of the district.

Prepared by Educational Information and Resource Center (EIRC)
The Center for Innovative Excellence in Education
Wolverton Building
200 College Drive
Blackwood NJ 08012-0200

BOARD / ADMINISTRATION FORUM

Toward A New Reality: September 28, 2015

Board of Education members and school district administrators conducted preliminary strategic planning work in preparation for the scheduled community engagement work sessions. After a warm-up exercise, "Alternate Reality," work session participants organized in small groups to tackle the question they were charged to address. This was a placemat-designed activity providing recording space for individual as well as consensus thinking.

Participants were organized in five groups and charged with recording their individual thinking regarding the three big ideas that, if achieved, they believed could launch Hillsborough Township Public Schools to the next level. After thinking and working in small groups, participants shared their ideas around the table. Finally, participants at each table were asked to come to consensus on three to five ideas they would bring forward to the large group. Their consensus responses were as follows, with sub-sets for each major item listed to illustrate thought and discussion.

Early childhood education

Sub-sets: Early childhood enrichment
 Full-day kindergarten
 Universal preschool

New high school

Sub-sets: College and Career preparation
 High school as community center
 Expanded concurrent college enrollment
 Innovative STEM and vocational education academies
 Reorganization of K-12 structure

Performing Arts

Sub-sets: Performing arts center
 An asset for school and community use

STAKEHOLDER FORUMS

Points of Pride: October 6, 2015

Community members, Board of Education members, teachers and staff, and administration assembled to initiate development of a strategic plan that will launch school improvement work for the next three to five years. Toward that end, the group studied what may be called “points of pride” in Hillsborough Township. To determine strategic directions, it is of great value to honor that which is working well. Points of pride, preserved and nurtured, may be considered to be the foundation for future initiatives.

During the first community forum, participants identified what is working well in the Hillsborough Township School District. Participants were organized in seventeen work groups, each of which was charged with recording the individual thinking of each participant and then coming to a consensus on three to five items, where possible. Each group then presented their consensus items regarding what is working well in the Hillsborough Township School Schools.

Consensus items were as follows, with sub-sets included that are representative of thought and discussion.

Deep and abiding pride in the community

- Subsets:
- Opportunities for involvement and fun
 - Community as a safe place for living and schooling
 - Families engaged in their child’s learning
 - Partnerships with RVCC, Duke Farms, local community and businesses
 - Recreational sports and activities
 - Renewable energy
 - Growth and diversity
 - Field trips to connect to community resources

Commitment to emerging technology and the tools of learning

- Sub-sets:
- One-to-one initiative
 - Technology infusion into the classroom, promoting learning and connecting students
 - Smart Boards, teacher microphones
 - Website for communication
 - Balanced and responsible use of social media

Continued on next page

Points of Pride: October 6, 2015 (continued)

Full spectrum of quality education programs and services

- Sub-sets: Top-ranked schools, great reputation
Advanced and AP classes
Music and the Arts
Quality programs for learners of all types, including those with disabilities
Identification and support of “at risk” students
Social and emotional support
Tech-Ed and Robotics
Strong math and language arts curricula
Wide range of co-curricular opportunities for students
Programs that connect to the community
Encouragement for critical thinking
Students feel welcome and safe
Healthy offerings through food service
Responsible budgeting
Facility maintenance and cleaning

Attracting and retaining high quality faculty, staff, and administrators

- Sub-sets: Ability to attract and retain top talent
Extraordinary caring, talented, involved personnel
Strong teacher-parent communication and connection
Staff professional development

Commitment to the liberal arts, including music and world languages

- Sub-sets: World languages at elementary level
Marching band
Excellent libraries
High school theatre

STAKEHOLDER FORUMS (continued)

Expectations for the Future: October 21, 2015

Community members and district staff reassembled for Session 2 of strategic planning. After reviewing highlights from the first session, "Points of Pride in the Hillsborough Township School District," participants focused on the question: "If we were here together three years from now, looking back over those three years that have passed, what would have happened in the Hillsborough Township Schools that would make you feel proud of the accomplishments of the District?" Once again, participants were organized into seventeen work groups. Individually, participants recorded their responses to this question. Participants then shared their thinking with other small group members. Participants then, by consensus, identified points they agreed should be brought to the full participant group.

The following is a summary of consensus ideas and sub-sets of those ideas that emerged in some of those groups. Two ideas emerged as favored by more than half of the groups (though not necessarily the same groups) - early childhood education and building a new high school.

Early Childhood Education Facilities and Program

- Full day kindergarten for all students was strongly supported
- A smaller but significant number of groups also supported universal pre-school
- Some recognized that additional facilities would be needed to offer either or both
- A more comprehensive K-2 or P-2 program, including a greater emphasis on STEM and use of technology

High School Programs and Facilities

- Constructing a new, state-of-the-art high school was seen as essential to provide desired career and college-ready opportunities
- New high school facilities designed for academies that allow students to specialize in academic and vocational programs
- Constructing a Performing Arts Center
- Sustainable facilities with climate control
- Improved athletic facilities

Expectations for the Future: October 21, 2015 (continued)

A number of consensus items are grouped within two broader categories that might be called “Learning Initiatives” and “Student Life.” Learning initiatives include academic programs and approaches to learning, while “Student Life” might include programs and initiatives that may contribute to school and classroom climate and better attend to the needs of all learners.

Academic Program Initiatives

- Block scheduling to expand academic and vocational opportunities
- Learning as a process, not an outcome
- Attending to the needs of the student holistically
- Inter-disciplinary learning
- Partnerships and internships to connect locally and globally
- Expanding use of technology to online learning, business courses, coding and programming at the elementary level
- Gifted and talented, honors, and advanced courses in all grades
- Support for special needs students
- More options in world languages

Student Life

- Flexibility in mindset, time usage, facility usage
- Smaller class size
- Safety and security
- Real life skills
- Tending to emotional needs

STAKEHOLDER FORUMS (continued)

How Do We Get There? Creating an Action Plan: November 18, 2015

Community members and district staff convened for a third session to consider the priority goal areas identified through the work of Session 2. From discussions and consensus-building in Session 2, six goal areas were identified.

Maximize Career Readiness

Maximize College Readiness

Individualize Learning Opportunities

Instill Independence, Critical Thinking, Resilience

Increase Ties with the Community

Increase Ties with the World

Participants worked in small groups brainstorming the six goal areas named above. Their challenge was to identify action steps that would support the accomplishment of improvements in the goal areas they have identified. In this exercise, the groups identified action steps they believe would be important to take if there were no budgetary restrictions. They were also asked to create action steps which would not require substantial cost for operating funds or additional human resources. What follows is a summary of the work accomplished during this third planning session.

Goal 1: Maximize Career Readiness

With no budgetary limitations:	Academies and vocational programs within the high school Apprenticeships/co-op programs, internships including students with learning disabilities
Minimal cost in funds or personnel:	Partnerships with corporations regarding employability Study and implement best practices Emphasize communication skills, e.g. writing, explaining Mentor and shadow with community resources Expand Naviance for college planning

How Do We Get There? Creating an Action Plan: November 18, 2015 (continued)

Goal 2: Maximize College Readiness

- With no budgetary limitations: Full day kindergarten
New state-of-the-art high school with facilities for expanded curricula
- Minimal cost in funds or personnel: Cross grade learning opportunities
Block scheduling to add extra class
Dual enrollment classes for high school and college credit
More electives at the high school
Improve student communication across all media
More connections with colleges

Goal 3: Individualize Learning Opportunities

- With no budgetary limitations: Create academies in high school
Improve expanded facilities for flexible use
Reduce class size
- Minimal cost in funds or personnel: Individualized and relevant professional development
Group students by ability/interest rather than grade
Project-based learning
Partner with international schools
Online courses
Expand gifted and talented program

Goal 4: Instill Independence, Critical Thinking, Resilience

- With no budgetary limitations: Full day kindergarten
Full day pre-kindergarten
Reduce class size
- Minimal cost in funds or personnel: More advanced STEM at earlier grades (4th or 5th)
Choice of world languages at elementary level
Mental health support, resources
Parental outreach and support
Safe environment for failure
Life coaching (financial literacy and coping skills)

How Do We Get There? Creating an Action Plan: November 18, 2015 (continued)

Goal 5: Increase Ties with the Community

- With no budgetary limitations: Intergenerational activities
Performing arts center
- Minimal cost in funds or personnel: Brag about accomplishments
Promote school events throughout community
Partner with local businesses to foster volunteerism, internships, and work readiness
Hotline for teen stress, mental health

Goal 6: Increase Ties with the World

- With no budgetary limitations: Extended world language time at elementary level
Exchange students (international and domestic)
- Minimal cost in funds or personnel: Interact with classrooms in other nations (Skype, Facetime, etc)
Use distance learning for virtual field trips, partnering with remote schools on projects
Mandatory volunteer service
Cultural clubs
Host international activities

STAKEHOLDER FORUMS (continued)

Studying the Data: December 8, 2015

Stakeholders reconvened in a fourth session to review the Goal Areas identified in previous sessions and to take note of strengths and challenges as they might affect our ability to realize those Goal Areas. Stakeholders worked in small groups and shared out their conclusions as follows.

Goal 1: Maximize Career Readiness

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Strengths | High attendance rate
High and increasing performance in math and science
Active parental involvement
Technology education |
| Challenges | Need for better metrics for career readiness than attendance and 8 th grade Algebra I enrollment
Disparities in career readiness among elementary schools
Lack of data to analyze gaps between groups
Maintaining level of technology education |

Goal 2: Maximize College Readiness

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Strengths | High attendance rate
High enrollment in 8 th grade Algebra I
Strong math scores |
| Challenges | Parental commitment to attendance
Improving literacy scores
Low participation in PSAT
15% of students not college bound
Improve academic performance
Fidelity to teaching methodology
Gaps in achievement |

Studying the Data: December 8, 2015 (continued)

Goal 3: Individualize Learning Opportunities

- Strengths**
- Student capacity for learning is high
 - Large offering of AP classes
 - Some opportunities for international travel to enhance coursework
 - Literacy scores are improving by the end of 8th grade
 - Math scores are consistently high in grades 5-8
 - One to one initiative is sustainable
- Challenges**
- Large special education population
 - Lack of academies at high school
 - Flexibility to allow online, early hour and after hours classes, on-site college courses
 - Appropriate facilities for classes and clubs, e.g. robotics, swimming
 - Need for additional resources and revenue or reallocation of funds and resources
 - Current facilities restrict our ability to offer many valuable opportunities
 - Some students do not plan for college until late in high school experience
 - Literacy scores lower than math scores at middle school
 - Lack of full day kindergarten

Goal 4: Instill Independence, Critical Thinking, Resilience

- Strengths**
- Technology
 - BoroSAFE—Year of Gratitude
 - Diverse population that supports education
 - High SAT and other measures of achievement level compared to peer group
- Challenges**
- High school ranking compared to peers needs to be raised in some indicators of college readiness and achievement
 - Loss of social skills due to technology
 - Class size needs to be reduced
 - Need for earlier and more STEAM
 - Need for block schedules
 - Need for more guidance, CST, and HIB services in every elementary school
 - Capacity to deal with possible influx of disadvantaged students
 - Somewhat weak social fabric, not including COAH residents
 - Need to include all the diverse cultures of Hillsborough in programs and curriculum

Studying the Data: December 8, 2015 (continued)

Goal 5: Increase Ties with the Community

- Strengths** Sound fiscal practices that have established positive community-school relationship that could support community-business-school initiatives
- Challenges** Lack of funds for community interests/goals
Organizational/management costs for programs linking schools to community
Personnel stretched thin
Need for public-private partnerships that generate revenue
Need flexible scheduling for high schoolers for volunteerism and jobs

Goal 6: Increase Ties with the World

- Strengths** Math and science performance
Community is growing in ethnic diversity
Chinese and Spanish instruction at elementary level
Chinese, Spanish, German, Italian, and French offered at high school
Technology for Skype or Facetime opportunities for international connections
- Challenges** Increase amount of time for world language instruction at elementary level
Literacy performance
Demographic imbalance between schools
Achievement gaps between ethnic groups
Imbalance in special education population between schools
Security for international students here and for students who go abroad

Strategic Planning Next Steps: 2017-2022

From the several stakeholder meetings described above, more than fifty distinct ideas emerged from meetings designed to identify priorities for the next five years. These ideas fell, for the most part, into three distinct buckets:

College Readiness and Career Readiness

Early Childhood Education

Individualized Learning Opportunities and Student Life

1. College Readiness and Career Readiness

Many specific areas of focus fell into this area including:

- Redesigning the High School
 - * Block Scheduling
 - * Unique Academies to Focus on Specific Themes
 - * Vocational Training
- Facilities
 - * Building a New High School
 - ◇ Supporting Vocational/Technical Programs
 - ◇ Supporting STEM
 - ◇ Supporting the HS Redesign Concepts
 - ◇ Improving Fine and Performing Arts venue
 - ◇ Improving Athletic Facilities

2. Early Childhood Education

Two main broadly held areas of interest were:

- Full Day Kindergarten
- Preschool for all

3. Individualized Learning Opportunities and Student Life

This group of ideas included many areas essential to making the learning experience positive in both academic and nonacademic areas.

- Mental Health Resources
- Internships/Partnerships with the Community
- STEM in Younger Grades
- Class Size Reduction
- Curriculum Innovations
- Gifted and Talented Programs

Next Steps

The three buckets identified above will require deep study and planning to provide the Board of Education with enough information to make a well-informed decision as to what and how to pursue the ideas percolated in the stakeholder meetings. Our suggestion is to make the 2016--2017 school year a "Year of Study" where work groups research each of three areas with specific deliverables from each group.

Due to the nature of the recommendations from each group, the Board will most likely be provided with recommendations to increase the educational investment made by our community in order to support building classrooms, and/or a new high school. Once the Board decides on what to pursue, logistics will need to be developed and verified. This will be the balance of the Strategic Planning work for the 2017-2018 school year. Inviting the voters to pass a referendum to fund the Strategic Plan would be scheduled for 2018 and the completion of the projects and implementation of the Strategic Plan would happen in the following years. It is important to note that the Board will be retiring a significant amount of debt during the 2021-2022 school year, which would decrease the tax impact of a building referendum.

Expectations for the Work Groups

Each of the three work groups will be responsible to submit a report to the Board of Education no later than August 31, 2017. The report will have the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Major Areas of Focus / Anticipated Benefits
4. Review of Literature/Research Supporting the Need to Implement the Areas of Focus
5. Budget
6. Recommendations with Rationale
7. Closing

Each committee will have a chair who will be responsible for recruiting members, scheduling meetings, developing agendas, leading the meetings, accounting for expenses, submitting the Work Group Report, and presenting it to the Governance Committee and the Board of Education for its consideration.

Each committee will receive a budget to be determined by the Governance Committee to fund travel, expert advice, and miscellaneous expenditures.

Members of the Work Groups will be representatives of the community including teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and students.

Each work group chair will submit a list of members, schedule of meetings, and tentative agendas for each meeting no later than February 28, 2017. Work Groups will meet no fewer than five times prior to July 31, 2017. Progress will be noted in April, May, June, and July of 2017.