

# Creating a Strategic Plan for the Bernards Township School District

## District Mission Statement

The mission of the Bernard's Township School District is to provide a superior education which results in academic excellence, responsible behavior, good citizenship and fosters social-emotional development so that ultimately each student will be able to:

- Maximize his/her potential.
- Become a contributing member of society.
- Maintain a commitment to life-long learning.
- Achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade level

## Session 2 of 3

### Developing a Vision for the Bernards Township School District

On October 15, 2018 Bernards School District administration, staff, parents, board members and community members came together to continue the strategic planning process. The second meeting's topic focused on creating a shared vision for the Bernards Township School District.

The meeting began with welcoming remarks by Robin McKeon, Board President. Gwen Thornton and Kathy Winecoff from New Jersey School Boards Association facilitated the strategic planning process with an overview of the October 1, 2018 meeting and an introduction to the visioning exercise that the group would be undertaking.

To begin the visioning process, participants were asked to picture themselves away from the district for 5 years and returning to find the Bernards Township School District on the cover of TIME magazine, with the caption "Schools that Succeed." The participants were tasked with developing a profile of that identifies what each student knows and is able to do focusing on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, content mastery, personal attributes and interpersonal skills. The groups were to identify what initiatives, programs, or services the district would need to expand, institute or change in order to ensure every graduate is successful.

The various stakeholders then gathered in three randomly assigned groups to brainstorm their visions of how the district achieved this remarkable success. Each group's outcomes were shared with all meeting participants. The session concluded with the identification of common themes throughout the groups' work and broad goal areas for the next meeting.

## Dark Green Group

### **Vision- Content Mastery**

- Confidence & proficiency in STEAM
- Finding, processing and applying information to real world problems
- Life-long learner
- Experiential learning
- Wellness/health
- System of government / civics
- Culturally literate
- Environmentally aware
- Financial literacy
- Systems thinking

### **Vision- Personal Attributes**

- Accountable
- Respectful
- Empathetic
- Confidence
- Resilient
- Flexibility/adaptable
- Kind/considerate
- Creative
- Integrity
- Trustworthy
- Humble
- Self-aware
- Independent
- Risk-taking

### **Vision- Interpersonal Skills**

- Listen and respond appropriately
- Find your voice and know how to communicate it
- Build relationships
- Social awareness
- Collaboration
- Openness
- Inclusivity
- Read people

## Four C's

Critical Thinking: Discern important information, prioritize, problem solve

Communication: Articulate / write clearly; know you audience, formulate arguments & persuade

Collaboration: Listen actively; belief in what others say; work with others you may disagree with

Creativity: Non-linear thinking; thoughtfully express non-ideas

## Orange Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Firm Foundational Skills-</li><li>• Standards based</li><li>• Critical thinking</li><li>• Exposure</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resiliency</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Creativity</li><li>• Articulation</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborative</li><li>• Empathetic</li><li>• Application</li></ul>

## Yellow Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connect t real world</li><li>• Read, write using proper grammar and mechanics</li><li>• Speak a second language</li><li>• Use technology appropriately and efficiently</li><li>• Global, environmental and culture awareness</li><li>• Find their passion through broad exposure</li><li>• Informed citizen and consumer</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to manage change- resilience, self-advocacy, accepting of criticism and failure</li><li>• Risk taking/decision making</li><li>• Self -awareness/confidence/management</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborative</li><li>• Empathy</li><li>• Conflict resolution</li><li>• Social Skills</li></ul>

## Red Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
Interdisciplinary Approach including the Arts & Humanities. Content to include:
Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• American History</li><li>• Global History</li><li>• Economics</li><li>• Personal Financial Literacy</li><li>• Civics</li><li>• Ethics</li></ul>
Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Biology</li><li>• Environmental Science</li></ul>
Math

- Arithmetic
- Algebra
- Statistics
- Data Analysis

Health & PE

- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Physical /Mental health
- Body systems

ELA

- Basic Communication Skills (speaking, listening, writing, grammar, spelling)

World Languages

- Cultural Awareness
- Open-minded

**Vision- Personal Attributes**

- Socially responsible
- Resourceful
- Resilient
- Independent
- Kind
- Adaptive
- Healthy risk taker
- Well rounded
- expressive

**Vision- Interpersonal Skills**

- empathetic
- cooperative
- leadership skills
- sympathetic

## Blue Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• foundation of skills</li><li>• problem-solvers</li><li>• real-life situations</li><li>• content available for variety of learners</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• well adjusted</li><li>• independent learner</li><li>• grit</li><li>• respectful</li><li>• integrity</li><li>• self-starters</li><li>• curious</li><li>• creativity</li><li>• organized</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• team players</li><li>• compassionate/kind</li><li>• empathetic cultures</li><li>• communication</li><li>• good listener</li><li>• healthy competitor</li></ul>

## Black Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
Helping each child to reach his/her full potential; teach child where he/she is at; active thinking
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
Help each child to appreciate his/her strengths; self-awareness regarding strengths, challenges & limitations; self-love
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>

Help student learn to lead and be a team player;  
developing resiliency and learning from mistakes;  
developing empathy and appreciation

Critical Thinking: Encourage “out of the box” thinking

Collaboration: Including ALL students learning from each other

Communication: Self-advocacy; face-to-face conversations

Creativity: Encourage students to pursue their own unique interests

## Red Heart Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acquisition of knowledge and ability to apply</li><li>• Critical reading-discern POV, fact/fiction</li><li>• Broad based learning- integration of diverse content</li><li>• Civics-being an informed citizen</li><li>• History- understanding of globalization, diversity</li><li>• Digital citizenship</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotional regulation</li><li>• Tolerance</li><li>• Risk taking</li><li>• Intrinsically motivate</li><li>• Gratitude</li><li>• Awareness of others</li><li>• Kindness</li><li>• Fairness/impartiality</li><li>• Using your voice</li><li>• Accountability</li></ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital citizenship</li><li>• Active/respectful listening</li><li>• Honesty</li><li>• Integrity</li><li>• Trustworthiness</li><li>• Collaboration</li></ul>

- Positive reinforcement
- Team player- both leaders and follower
- Empathy
- Philanthropic
- Open minded
- Positive/healthy climate
- Connections/community/culture
- Creativity-seeks out of box solutions
- Problem solving
- Time/space mindfulness

## Silver Star Group

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• civics</li> <li>• grammar</li> <li>• fundamentals</li> <li>• study skills (mid-terms, finals)</li> </ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-advocate</li> <li>• confident</li> <li>• honesty</li> <li>• independence</li> <li>• self-awareness of others perception</li> <li>• values</li> <li>• kind</li> <li>• realistic expectations of self/others</li> </ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• empathy</li> <li>• collaboration</li> <li>• communication (face-to-face)</li> </ul>

**Fuchsia Group- To create a community that prepares all students for life by creating well-rounded individuals that can think critically, make decisions, work together and solve problems through educational experiences**

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand elementary science and world language (not LAL)</li> <li>• Enhanced appropriate placement</li> <li>• Civic engagement- community service</li> <li>• Create sense of community</li> <li>• Character education</li> </ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>

**Lime Green Group**

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• readiness for college &amp; career</li> <li>• exposure to career opportunities</li> <li>• hands on learning</li> <li>• use of technology – infused into curriculum, develop specific skills</li> <li>• stress management (courses, programs)</li> </ul>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resiliency</li> <li>• self-advocate</li> <li>• independence</li> <li>• overcome adversity</li> <li>• More on the student/less on the parent</li> </ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build / develop school culture, spirit (motto, etc.)</li> <li>• Programming to help kids find themselves</li> </ul>

- Freshman activities/programs

## Purple Group

### Vision- Content Mastery

- Problem-solving/Science/technology
- NJ Standards/Core Subject Knowledge
- Baseline of all subjects
- Master of some subjects
- Industrial Arts
- Baseline Education for college
- World Events

### Vision- Personal Attributes

- Independence
- Self-advocate
- Preservice
- Coping skills
- Formulate opinions
- Ethical
- Resilience/coping
- Curiosity
- Healthy balance
- Competent
- Confident
- Self-learning
- Kind

### Vision- Interpersonal Skills

- Tolerant
- kind
- team player
- help others
- empathy
- speaking/writing skills
- engaging

### Critical Thinking

- ability to assess
- independent
- self-reflective

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• problem-solving</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas/ question formulation</li> <li>• Defend opinions</li> <li>• Written verbal, visual, arts/music</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common goal</li> <li>• Hear perspectives of others</li> <li>• Listen to differing opinions</li> <li>• With all types of people</li> <li>• With all types of languages</li> </ul>
<b>Creativity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence necessary to be an independent learner given the constraints</li> <li>• Synthesize new from already existent</li> </ul>

**White Group**

<b>Vision- Content Mastery</b>
<p>Build time in for hands on, inquiry-based projects to achieve mastery          Career exposure</p>
<b>Vision- Personal Attributes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take risks</li> <li>• Make decisions</li> <li>• Feeling safe</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Parent Education</li> <li>• Meeting places for kids to de-stress or meet with groups</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Resiliency/coping skills</li> </ul>
<b>Vision- Interpersonal Skills</b>

- Advocacy
- Articulate needs
- Public speaking
- Service learning  
(open, creative opportunities in & outside of the campus)

Teachers need:

- PD
- Coaching
- Ability to add in 4 C's based on students

## **Common Threads**

**Based on group input the following are the most often mentioned areas:**

### **Content Mastery**

- 1.** Project based/experiential learning
- 2.** Expansion of STEAM and begin at elementary level
- 3.** Foundational skills: grammar, mechanics, spelling, communication (speaking, listening, reading to discern POV; fact or fiction)
- 4.** Digital Citizenship-efficient, effective use of technology including specific technology skills and data analysis
- 5.** Interdisciplinary approach; i.e. arts and humanities
- 6.** Financial Literacy
- 7.** World Language include cultural awareness and expand at elementary level
- 8.** Career Education-Industrial Arts/Other Life skill areas
- 9.** Character Education
- 10.** Civics-world events/ citizenship
- 11.** Focus on "middle" learner(s)
- 12.** Opportunities for independent learning on and off campus

## **Interpersonal Skills**

1. Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Empathy
4. Compassion and kindness
5. Social Skills- awareness of self and other
6. Team play both as leader and follower
7. Inclusive/tolerant
8. Leadership skills

## **Personal Attributes**

1. Independent learner(s)
2. Self-advocacy-accountability
3. Kindness
4. Resilience/grit
5. Ethics-integrity/honesty
6. Creativity and imagination
7. Confidence
8. Responsible risk taking
9. Respectful of self and others

## **Group Suggested Goal Areas**

1. Developing Student Competencies
  - a. Academic competencies: Variety of learning opportunities to include more experiential/interdisciplinary learning (differentiation, middle students, extra-curricular, STEAM, foundational skills)
  - b. SEL Competencies and Civic Engagement (Empathy, Self Awareness, Resilience, Ethics etc.)
  - c. Health and wellness (support services, stress, anxiety, drugs and alcohol)
2. Developing Staff Competencies and Empowering Staff
  - a. Professional Development
  - b. Health and wellness
3. Safety and Security
  - a. School culture and climate (character education, support services, tolerance, inclusiveness, digital citizenship)

- b. Facility/Procedural improvements
- 4. Communication and Collaboration
  - a. Enhance overall student/staff/family relationships via communication
  - b. Increase parent and community education