

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

**Nick Markarian
Superintendent of Schools**

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DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Bernards 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 Student Learning Standards at all grade levels.

DISTRICT BELIEFS

- Education is our first priority.
- Intellectual, social, physical and emotional development are essential to a student's education.
- Children learn in different ways; we have a responsibility to help all students maximize their potential.
- Students will benefit from a challenging curriculum with high standards.
- Individual student achievement is maximized by high expectations.
- Co-curricular and community service activities are important components of effective education.
- Education provides a foundation for life-long learning, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, decision-making and respect for the individual.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bernards Township Board of Education participated in a Strategic Planning initiative along with their neighbors, community members, friends, teachers and school district administrators to create a shared vision for the future of the Bernards Township School District. This process was facilitated by New Jersey School Boards Association.

Board of Education

Robin McKeon, President

Karen Gray, Vice President

Michael Byrne

Bev Darvin Cwerner*

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New Jersey School Boards Association

Gwen Thornton

Kathy Winecoff

Maryann Friedman

**Bev Darvin Cwerner has since retired from the Board of Education.*

The district's Strategic Plan could not have been completed without the valuable time and input from all the following participants:

Administration

Alex Blinder	Joanne Hozeny	Rich Shello
Tara Bowman	Karen Hudock	Stephanie Smith
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Scott Graber	Stephanie Orr	Hank Werner
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Staff Members

Toni Anthony	Peter Fiore	David Persily
Deirdre Bachler	Mary Beth Gakos	Mary Ellen Peters
Alexander Ballas	Michael Gilmore	Steve Richards
Fiorelle Bologne	Jennifer Glaydura	Meredith Ross
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Frank Caccavale	Debbie Karuppan	William Stanzel
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Natasha Doski	Kristine Mercurio	MeganVan Pelt
Mark Dotta	Erin Noonan	

Students, Parents and Community Members*

Laurie Albee	Sweetie Janani	Lori Princiotto
Heather Athanasiou	Deeba Kallvath	Nesa Rossi
Madeline Athanasiou	Rippi Karda	Jaideep Roy
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Raghavan Halthore	Deborah Naude	Jesse Yu
Mita Harivallabhdas	Karen O'Brien	Helen Zhang
Pamela Haviland	Tissiana Oliva	Rui Zhang
Sarah Heller	Ryan Parker	Amily Zhang
Jing Huang	Carolanne Patetta	Lan Zhao
Roykurman Iravnesan	Stella Perna	Ian Zheno
Prachi Jain	Chitra Phadke	Hem Zhujo
Priya Jaiswal	Michelle Prejean	
	Jonathan Prejean	

**Names were taken from meeting sign-in sheets, any identified errors should be reported for correction.*

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

1. Strategic Planning Meeting - October 1, 2018

- a. Review of Current State of the Schools
- b. Overview of the Strategic Planning Process
- c. Meeting Topic: What Are the Strengths, Achievements, and Challenges of the Bernards Township School District?

2. Strategic Planning Meeting - October 15, 2018

- a. Review of Current District Mission Statement
- b. Meeting Topic: Developing a Shared Vision for the Bernards Township School District
- c. Four Goal Areas Identified:
 - i. Developing Student Competencies
 - ii. Developing Staff Competencies and Empowering Staff
 - iii. Safety and Security
 - iv. Communications and Collaboration

3. Strategic Planning Meeting - November 5, 2018

- a. Review of Previous Meetings and Strategic Planning Process
- b. Develop Initiatives for Each Goal Area Identified During Previous Meeting

4. Present Strategic Plan - April 22, 2019

STRAND OVERVIEW

The four identified strands are:

1. Developing Student Competencies
2. Developing Staff Competencies/Empowerment
3. Safety and Security
4. Communication and Collaboration

STRAND 1: Developing Student Competencies - Goals and Subgoals

Goal 1.1

Provide a variety of learning opportunities that meet the needs of all students and include more experiential and interdisciplinary learning activities in order to foster a growth mindset and develop lifelong learners who are ultimately prepared for their post-secondary plans.

Subgoal 1.1.A

Improve student outcomes by aligning opportunities for students that match their needs (varied learning styles, struggling learners, middle learners and advanced learners).

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Examine existing academic and co-curricular opportunities available for students K-12 -Categorize and communicate academic and co-curricular opportunities available to all students -Continue to build partnership between school and families through Parent Academy style discussions about these and other issues that impact the students' learning experiences (define success) -Conduct a gap analysis to evaluate pockets or subgroups of students whose needs are not being addressed. -Develop programming to fill the gaps -Diversify the elementary program with the implementation of QUEST, implementation of Spanish Language Instruction and redesign of the Media/Technology curriculum -Evaluate support programming for all students -Expand Dual Enrollment Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5 Year Program Evaluation Cycle -Newsletters & Friday Folders -Attendance at Parent Academy Presentations and PTO Meetings -Course selection and placement information, extra-curricular enrollments -PRIDE survey and community surveys -Student evaluations of classes and staff -Evaluate achievement and growth data for students across all levels

Subgoal 1.1.B

Increase opportunities for students to explore career, college and vocational opportunities.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Examine existing career, college and vocational opportunities available to students K-12-Explore opportunities to increase student exposure to professions in a variety of fields, e.g. field trips, assemblies, internships-Expand upon interdisciplinary curricular and programming opportunities, including STEAM, the Humanities and the Arts-Explore Structured Learning Experience (SLE) opportunities and the college partnerships associated therein-Expand the Senior Internship Program-Explore Somerset County Partnerships-Improve communications about programming in order to increase participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Student evaluations of classes and staff-Review of Program of Studies offerings and set goals for program refinement-Culture & Climate Survey (WAMS)-Measures of Mental Health Trends

Goal 1.2

Strengthen students' social emotional learning competencies through building-based programming which is also integrated into the curriculum.

Subgoal 1.2.A

Create an articulated character education curriculum K-12 utilizing common language.

Opportunities for Action

Measures

- Create a district committee to evaluate current programs and existing programs to make suggestions for comprehensive program
- Develop a core set of district beliefs utilizing common language, that allow for each school to establish, support and promote character development in unique but articulated ways increasing in complexity with age
- Use School Safety Team information at each school to help drive curricular choices
- Continuation character education program at RHS (morning meeting, HR time)
- Create direct programming and an articulated character education program K-12
- Look at schedule opportunities to incorporate this programming
- Include a specific focus on Digital Citizenship throughout the curriculum

- Student evaluations of classes and staff
- SSD
- PRIDE Survey
- Measures of Mental Health Trends
- Parent information nights

Subgoal 1.2.B

Increase staff and student understanding of social emotional competencies and foster the development of these skills.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Create a consistent K-12 approach to SEL and assisting at risk students-Create protocol for implementing mindfulness within the schools-Direct instruction of SEL & indirect instruction of SEL including transition programs (i.e., peer leaders, etc.)-Teaching coping, problem-solving, resiliency starting at elementary level-Teach SEL roles relative to the title of teachers, parents, and students...what does it look like for each?-Specific campaigns to emphasize the message to parents, kids, students; consistent messaging (i.e. healthy stress); Importance of parents as role models; Increase parent engagement, involvement, and education re: stress, anxiety, drugs/alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Student evaluations of classes and staff-SSD-PRIDE Survey-Measures of Mental Health Trends-Parent information nights

Goal 1.3

Redesign a fully articulated district Health and Wellness program that links together services and programming designed to support students ability to become healthy and productive citizens in their school community.

Subgoal 1.3.A

Evaluate mental health support services and their ability to address the needs of at-risk students.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Continue to focus on providing emotional supports for at-risk students at all levels, e.g., ESS at RHS.-Conduct a review of the district's mental health support programs-Build curriculum and capacity for increased co-teaching between Health teachers and School Counselors/SACs in Health classes- Increase assemblies to address drugs/alcohol, e.g., former RHS students, parents, police and other outside agencies-Create counseling groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Student evaluations of classes and staff-Measures of Mental Health Trends-Pride Survey-Signs of Suicide Referrals to Counseling

Subgoal 1.3.B

Investigate policies and logistics that impact student and staff wellness and social emotional competencies.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Continue efforts to improve the transition between schools-Continue to explore feasibility of alternative bell schedules to support health/wellness-Investigate potential of a later start time-Increase efforts to educate the community about the effects of technology on students and explore policies to mitigate those effects, e.g., reducing screen time and educating students about the dangers of social media-Coaches and Activity Advisor Handbooks-Explore policies and practices that would decrease stress and promote a healthier balance between work and home life including, but not limited to the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">*No-homework nights, explore opportunities to partner with local business for discounts and increase/promote quality family time*Evaluate effectiveness of test days at Ridge and consider improvements*Examine the role of homework in the learning process.*Consider limiting the number of advanced courses (i.e., AP) provided and/or that students are permitted to take*Examine the implications and potential cost/benefit of unweighting courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Feedback from staff and students

Subgoal 1.3.C

Strengthen connections between students, staff and families.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Incorporate more mentoring opportunities for/between students-Identify students with limited / no connections to peers or staff-Specialized staff to assist and support students and parents in a therapeutic manner-Parent and staff training on warning signs /strategies / resources-Help students recognize warning signs among their peers-Establish an anonymous reporting system-Assign a student leader to new students to transition them into new buildings-Revamp Freshman Orientation at RHS-Community Book Reads-Staff Appreciation Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Tracking number of reports/referrals from anonymous sources-Parent feedback on training sessions-Surveys

STRAND 2: Developing Staff Competencies/Empowerment - Goals

Goal 2.1

Increase the percentage of staff college offerings related to staff wellness from approximately 5% to at least 20% of the total staff college offerings.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Define wellness -Professional Development Committee and School Improvement Panel -Surveys of staff -Universal Staff College survey form -Training for administrators on SEL topics (retreat, common language, Cabinet) -Utilize a "Train the trainers" model with administrators and counseling staff -Make Staff Wellness and Staff Professional Development Standing Items on Full Cabinet Agendas Under Assistant Superintendent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluation of staff college bulletins

Goal 2.2

Develop a comprehensive Instructional Coaching program which sets individual goals to enhance instructional practice/improve student outcomes and achieves those goals with at least a 50% success rate.

Opportunities for Action

Measures

-Hiring instructional coaches, training, informing staff about the role of the coach

-Input form and Survey

STRAND 3: Safety and Security - Goal

Goal 3.1

Reduce the annual total number of documented instances of improper access to the school facilities during the school day to zero by June 30, 2023.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Communicate building access procedures to all stakeholders-Improve signage on building doors to direct visitors-Enhance exterior security camera systems-Enhance electronic door access systems-Increase use of security film on glass-Increase active monitoring of school building doorways-Upgrade door hardware-Utilize virtual floor plans for first responders-Implement visitor screening systems-Maintain lists of expected visitors	Monthly reports documenting instances where improper access occurred. Include instances of incorrect door use and undocumented visitors.

STRAND 4: Communication and Collaboration - Goals

Goal 4.1

Increase and standardize communication from the district/schools to parents/community.

<u>Opportunities for Action</u>	<u>Measures</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Genesis parent/student portal -Genesis automated communications associated with individual student reports (Schedules, grades, attendance, athletic forms and other forms, etc.) -Hootsuite social media platform -Onboarding new to district students -Google classroom and staff websites-consistency -Mass email messaging on Fridays (Friday Folders) -Honeywell Instant Alerts -Media Release Forms -Staff signatures on emails to include school social media -Communications to students - class emails/Google classroom, coach and club communications -Agenda item to include in stakeholder meetings -Staff training on best practices -Establish an approval system for the use of each communication outlet 	<p>Social Media Activity Reports</p> <p>Genesis Reports</p>

LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Strand 1: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction*, Director of School Counseling, Director of Special Services, Director of Athletics/Health and Physical Education, Superintendent

Strand 2: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources*, Superintendent

Strand 3: Director of Safety and Security*, Business Administrator, Director of Facilities, Superintendent

Strand 4: Director of Information Technology*, Superintendent

*team chairperson

NEXT STEPS FOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

- Establish priorities for action items
- Assign staff to action items
- Set timelines within 5 year window
- Organize a strategic plan communication structure
- Report progress at Board of Education meetings