



CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
— EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION —

STRATEGIC PLAN

2018-2023

APRIL 2018

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Chapter One

Introduction

The current Strategic Planning Committee of the Chester School District is comprised of twenty-one members representing various stakeholder groups in the community of Chester. Membership is as follows:

Christina Van Woert, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Tanya Dawson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Mike Tomasco, Chester Board of Education President
Raj Shah, Chester Board of Education Vice President
Heather Ronco, Chester Board of Education Member
Christopher Lowry, Chester Board of Education Member
Carolyn Kleppe-Collins, Chester Board of Education Member
Liz Madinabeitia, Chester Board of Education Member
Kerri Wright, Chester Board of Education Member
Amy Collins, Chester Board of Education Member
Rebekah Forlenza, Chester Board of Education Member, Community Member
Melissa Fair, Principal of Dickerson School
Michele Stanton, Principal of Bragg School
Andrew White, Principal of Black River Middle School
Jeanette Krone, Ed.D., Director of Student Services
Brad Currie, Director of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Michael Dougherty, Technology Director
Sara Kozlowski, Physical Education Teacher/CEA President
Nicole Healy, Literacy Teacher
Laura Garrison, Instructional Technology Coach
Namrta Shah, President Educational Foundation of the Chesters
Tonja Danowski, PTO President

Chapter Two

Where Are We Now?

Chester School District Points of Pride

Before we formally began the process of Strategic Planning, we began with a thorough analysis of all the Chester School District Points of Pride. The Chester School District has come so far through detailed strategic planning in the past and we wanted to formally examine all of the incredible strides we had made so far, in order to help us determine how we could come to soar even higher.

The Chester School District strives for excellence in education on a consistent basis. Through pedagogically sound teaching methods, real world learning experiences, top-notch infrastructure, plentiful resources, and outstanding community support, students are able grow and learn in ways once thought unimaginable.

Future Ready

Dickerson Elementary School, Bragg Elementary School, and Black River Middle School have all been designated as Future Ready through the rigorous Future Ready NJ certification process. Our robust infrastructure, 1:1 Chromebook Environment Grades 2-8, support from technology coaches, innovative programs, use of digital tools to enhance learning, and back end support from our technicians have helped get students prepared for what lies ahead in the future.



Professional Growth

Our teachers participate in professional learning communities in both the physical and virtual worlds to share best practices, analyze data, and plan learning experiences that impact student achievement. Throughout the school year faculty members attend workshops hosted by the Rutgers Professional Development Council. A point of pride for our district is our talented staff who present at our own in-service days and at educational conferences throughout the state. Our innovative and experienced instructional coaches support staff in 1:1, small group, and large group settings. Status quo is never an option.

Sustainability

Over the years the Chester School District has made a commitment to creating and maintaining learning environments that promote the success of students and highlighting the importance of greening our schools. Participation in recycling programs, monitoring electric consumption, establishing environmental clubs, taking part in Earth Day activities, rolling over to LED lighting, and transitioning to a paperless learning environment by way of digital workflow are some of the many ways that Chester is committing to a more sustainable future for its students.



STEM

Students in grades K-8 are enrolled in STEM courses that provide hands-on learning. Chester is home to one of the largest science fairs on the east coast. On any given day you can watch students in any one of our schools collaborating on and building solar powered objects, programming robots, designing parachutes, learning about tension and compression, and how simple machines work. The Next Generation Science Standards have been fully implemented and STEMScopes

Clubs

Over 50 club offerings throughout the district provide students with an opportunity to engage in experiences like Kinetics, Minecraft, Abilities Awareness, Meteorology, Destination Imagination, Forensics, TREP\$, Helping Hands, Art, and Chinese.

Music

Award-winning instrumental band and choral programs highlight the diverse music offerings students can be part of from grades 3-8. Students have opportunities to play strings or jazz band and sing in the various grade level ensembles. The Chester School District is very proud of the fact that Black River Middle School's Instrumental Band and Chorus have earned the Esprit de Corps and Superior ratings on numerous occasions at the Festival at Dorney Park.



Technology

Technology Education in the Chester School District begins as early as Preschool. Every student in grades 2-8 has the very own Chromebook. Each Elementary School has one state of the art computer lab. The Middle School has one state of the art computer lab. Formal computer education begins as early as Kindergarten and continues through grade 8.

Chester has stayed on the cutting edge of new technologies including coding programs, virtual reality, augmented reality, flight simulation, podcasting, video creation, immersion games, and Google Apps for Education to name a few. Every classroom in the district is equipped with a Smartboard.

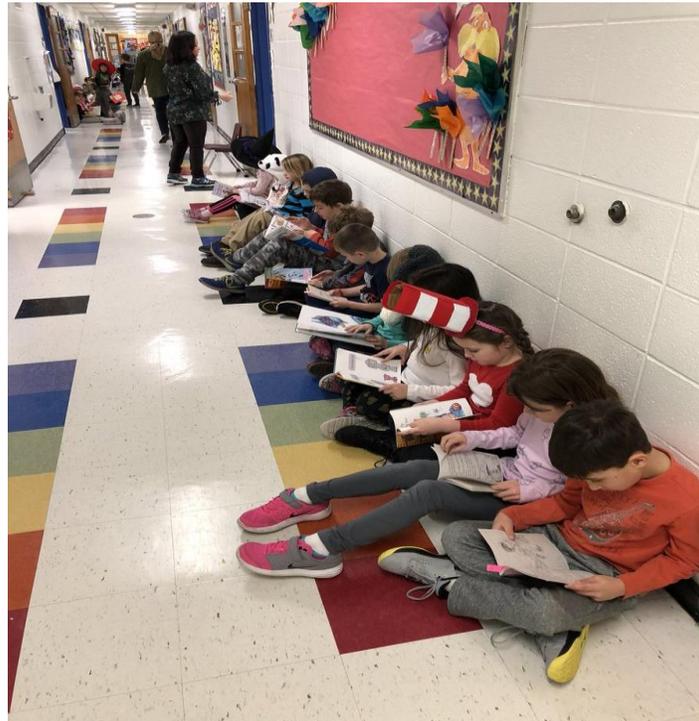
Athletics

The Bulldogs have won 9 county middle school championships over a five year span in Boys and Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Basketball, Cross Country, and Baseball. Additional

current sport's teams include Spring Track for Boys and Girls, Girls Softball, Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Lacrosse and Wrestling. The district also offers Intermural Volleyball Teams.

Literacy

Teachers throughout the district are supported by a literacy coach. Student reading levels are analyzed through an online benchmark assessment periodically throughout the school year. A balanced literacy program including guided reading and writer's workshop gives students the structure they need to be successful in the future. Over the years students have won various awards for their published work. Book rooms are located at Dickerson and Bragg and provide teachers with an opportunity to help support passionate readers. Our libraries in all three schools are full of print and digital resources that help enhance student's knowledge on a wide array of topics. Author programs, makerspaces, PTO Book Fairs, and the One School, One Book initiative highlight the Chester School District's commitment to integrating literacy across all subject areas.



Security

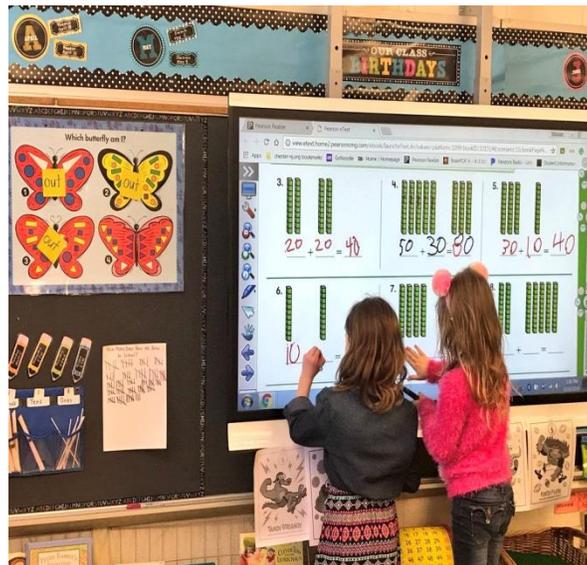
Our schools are outfitted with state of the art surveillance equipment. The district security coordinator, school safety specialist, and police continually collaborate to maintain safe learning environments. All schools are outfitted with HD cameras and staff utilize the Share911 web application to communicate during a crisis.

World Languages

Chinese, French, and Spanish classes are offered to students. Total immersion through reading, writing, and speaking is a point of pride for all teachers and students. In the elementary grades students take Spanish on a cycled basis. Then, once in middle school, students can choose from Spanish, French, or Mandarin Chinese.

Mathematics

Teachers throughout the district are supported by a math coach. Advanced placement math classes, including Geometry, are offered at Bragg Elementary School and Black River Middle School.



Faculty

One word: phenomenal! Teacher Experience Average 11 Years, Retention Rate is 91%, Faculty Attendance Rate: is 98%. Over 30 staff members are Level 1 Google Certified Educators. Throughout the school year faculty members participate in online and in person book talks to stay current with trends in education. Additionally, our staff sits on various committees including Strategic Planning, Educational Technology, School Safety, and the Professional Development Council as a way to make our great schools even greater.

Recognition

Black River Middle School is designated as a National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform "School to Watch" 2010-Present. Chester is home to the 2017 National Assistant Principal of the Year and various Teachers Who Rock award winners.

Community

The Board of Education, Chester PTO, and Educational Foundation, passionately support innovative and child-centered learning experience that our students experience on a consistent basis.

Special Education & English Language Learners

In each of the schools, we have special education teachers and district personnel such as an occupational therapist, speech and language specialists, paraprofessionals, a physical therapist, and a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). In addition, each school is assigned a Child Study Team member of a school psychologist, a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant, and a part-time school social worker. We also have ESL teachers in all three schools. During the summer months, special education students receive school year programming through Camp Achieve.



Drama

3rd-8th grade students have performed in The Little Mermaid and the Emperor's New Clothes over the years. Hundreds of students participate in our middle school and elementary school productions annually. In middle school, all students take performing arts class.

Achievement

The School Performance Reports indicate that our students exceed state targets in math and literacy. Overall Science, Algebra I and Geometry scores are close to perfect and speak to the high levels of teaching and learning throughout the district.

The Arts

Art education is an incredibly important part of the experiences students are offered in grades K-8. Every student takes an art class from the time they enter Dickerson and graduate from Black River. Students have the autonomy to display their talents in a multitude of ways in the physical and virtual worlds. Teachers leverage the power of iPads as a way for students to create and document their art work. Students have the ability to participate in art shows and art club.

Whole Child

Dickerson Students participate in the bucket fillers program and gain exposure to the pillars of character throughout the school during the various learning experiences. Bragg students participate in Third Tuesday Time that emphasizes the tenets of character education. Black River students participate in an advisory program that provides time and helps students make connections with cross-grade-level peers and a staff member.



As you can see, the Chester School District prides itself on providing all students the excellent education they deserve on a continual basis. The passion and pride that stakeholders take in supporting a well-rounded educational experience for our students is truly inspiring. When students leave the Chester School District they are prepared for what the world will deal them in the near and distant future.

Future Ready

Dickerson Elementary School, Bragg Elementary School, and Black River Middle School are all Future Ready Certified and prepare students to thrive in the digital age.



Sustainability

Our stakeholders are continually focused on creating and maintaining environmentally friendly learning spaces. The Chester School District is Sustainable NJ certified.



Growth

Teachers participate in professional learning communities and are committed to enhancing their effectiveness in the physical and virtual worlds.



STEM

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Music

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Languages

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Technology

Our 1:1 Chromebook initiative spans grades 2 thru 8. The district has a robust infrastructure and dedicated tech coaches and technicians that support students efforts.



CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



Literacy

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Whole Child

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Chapter Three

Planning for Strategic Planning

In May of 2017, the Superintendent of Schools was charged with embarking on a journey to research and write a Strategic Plan for the next five years for the Chester School District. In consultation with the members of the Board of Education, it was decided to work with two consultants on this process – Mr. David Hespe, Former New Jersey Commissioner of Education and Dr. Ron Butcher, New Jersey State Board of Education Member and Professor at Rowan University – to assist the Members of the Board of Education, the leadership team, district faculty and community members through this strategic visioning process.

The purpose of this endeavor was to provide the Board and the community with an overall strategic vision and detailed action plans to continue student growth, success and innovation over the next five years. This is the story of our journey to a Strategic Plan for the Chester community.

The scope of the work included:

1. Review of the district's real and perceived strengths and challenges through the following:
 - a. Analysis of the district's current mission statement and existing strategic plan.
 - b. Three Open Forum meetings for faculty, parents and community members to share their current understanding of district strengths and weaknesses, as well as future goals for the district.
 - c. Open survey to be distributed to all stakeholders to garner the opinions and ideas of those who could not attend Open Forum meetings.
 - d. Data analysis of district achievement scores, i.e. PARCC and internal measures of assessment.
 - e. Examination of other areas and definitions of students success and defined in the Chester School District Points of Pride.
 - f. Review of recent and future demographic trends.

2. Creation of a new Mission Statement and Vision Statement reflective of the Strategic Planning process.
3. Recommendations for continued and new and innovative approaches to instruction and assessment to foster ever greater student achievement.
4. Detailed action plans to achieve articulated Strategic Planning goals, both as district Board of Education goals and as the Superintendent's Merit Goals.
5. Plan for monitoring the accomplishment of Strategic Plan and Merit Goals in the future.
6. Preparation and community presentation of the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Expected Outcomes:

1. Projections and plans for current and future educational programs.
2. Procedures for assessment to monitor and evaluate existing and future programs.
3. Identification of needed resources to support current and existing programs.
4. Articulated pathways to manage the fluctuation of student enrollment and possibly changing demographics.

Chapter Four

A History of Strategic Planning in the Chester School District (2011-2012)

In 2011-2012, the leadership team of the district researched and wrote a Strategic Plan. In the process, five sub-committees were formed to investigate and create Action Plans in the following areas: Curriculum & Instruction, Technology, Support Services/Special Education, Student Life, Communication & Resources.

The Plan was very well received and participation rates were generally quite high. The overall goals of the plan were expected to be achieved within a seven to ten year time frame. The vast majority of the goals were actually achieved in three years' time and led to tremendous forward progress for our students.

The original goals from the 2012 Strategic Plan were as follows:

Curriculum and Instruction:

- (1) Review curriculum for expansion/incorporation of STEM content and activities;
- (2) Review and develop a partnership with appropriate staff to address accountability needs and new requirements (teacher effectiveness model/ACHIEVE NJ);
- (3) Review instructional practices across schools to establish district wide "best practices" inclusive of Differentiated Instruction and Professional Learning Communities.

Support Services/Special Education Goals:

- (1) Review responsibilities and services provided by three district guidance counselors to ensure that student needs are adequately met.

- (2) Review the value of student and possibly parent exit survey(s) from elementary to middle to high school to help determine programmatic strengths and challenges.
- (3) Identify clear, practical and realistic outcomes for students with special needs and provide the instruction and ancillary support for the students to achieve these outcomes.
- (4) Review identification procedures of special needs candidates and process for early intervention.
- (5) Develop an electronic longitudinal follow-up of Chester graduates to determine the effectiveness of preparation for high school and real world success.

Student Life Goals:

- (1) Review Related Arts offerings and relevance to desired 21st century student outcomes and Chester student experience.
- (2) Review and enhance student input mechanisms and leadership opportunities.
- (3) Co-Curricular activities centered on perseverance/self-discipline, ethical behavior, ability to work with others and understanding of physical health and fitness needs, goal setting and follow through skills, positive self-image, competitive experiences, good sportsmanship and leadership qualities.
- (4) Respect diversity by nurturing the individual needs of all students, teachers, and community in a welcoming environment.
- (5) Consider establishment of an alumni organization/support group to enhance current student life, for curriculum input and possible foundation service.

Communication Goals:

- (1) Expand use of district website in promoting student successes and achievements.
- (2) Consider increased use of “push” technology and/or Facebook, Twitter and other social medias to increase

communication to community, parents, students and alumni.

- (3) Consider establishment of a graduate follow-up initiative to track student success and program relevance through high school and beyond.
- (4) Establish community partnerships between the district and local business, government, educational and civic organizations to provide services and learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

Technology Goals:

- (1) Maximize the benefits of the BOE/District investment in technology by ensuring that these resources are refurbished and efficiently located, maintained, secured and enhanced to meet Chester's expanding instructional and business needs.
- (2) Review the use of technology to offer additional relevant curricular options to prepare for 21st century challenges.
- (3) Provide for staff development opportunities to enhance differentiated instruction through the appropriate and effective use of technology.
- (4) Develop and implement a plan to generate content and/or grade level technology experts from existing staff to serve as a resource for all staff.

Resources Goals:

- (1) Attract and retain quality teachers and administrators.
- (2) Hold everyone employed by the district accountable for student achievement.
- (3) Maintain adequate fund balances.
- (4) Insure significant long-term debt capacity (i.e. Debt service for facilities.)
- (5) Maintain positive revenue to expenditures ratios.
- (6) Review restroom maintenance procedures throughout the district to ensure daily cleanliness.
- (7) Ensure that purchased technology is being effectively and appropriately utilized.

(8) Review, implement and sustain an information management system that supports system-wide collaboration & provides employees, parents and students across the district with secured access to the information they need.

Chapter Five

The Chester School District Technology Strategic Plan (2014)

As a result of this Five Year Strategic Plan and the Communications & Resources Sub-Committee, the Chester Board of Education adopted the following as a Board Goal in 2012:

Assess the district's current utilization and technology support needs, explore and enhance professional development needs for staff, and develop a district wide communication plan in order to enable the district maximize the implementation of technology.

Goal 1: Convene a district wide Technology Committee of district stakeholders from within and outside the school district to assess the district's current technology utilization and support needs, explore and enhance professional development opportunities for staff, and develop a district wide communication plan in order to enable the district to maximize the implementation of technology.

This work was originally designed to be accomplished through the use of three sub-committees in the areas of: Curriculum & Professional Development, Web-Site & Social Media, and District Equipment & Maintenance. The Committee worked diligently over a two and a half year period and accomplished a great deal that moved the district forward toward the overall achievement of the original goals. In fact, most of the stated goals were achieved in far less than five years.

The members of the committee proved to be a dynamic group of individuals who had considerable expertise in the area of educational technology specifically and technology in general. Working alongside our Chester educators, they were generous in sharing their knowledge and expertise and our district began to become well known for our technological proficiency. Elements of this could be seen in our *Schools To Watch* Award and in the many districts from New Jersey and around the world who visited the Chester School District, including administrators from China and the Netherlands. These accolades have continued and most recently resulted in one of our illustrious teachers being chosen

as the only teacher, and school, in North America to be featured in a Google advertisement campaign.

The Chester School District Technology Committee Version 2.0

However despite enormous gains and positive changes, we knew that more work was left to be done. It became evident over time though that technology was changing at an incredibly fast pace. The Committee had achieved all of its initial goals and needed a more focused assignment moving forward which resulted in the goal of studying, researching and writing this strategic plan in November 2014.

The Strategic Plan Technology Committee Version 2.0 began with a review of all that had been accomplished in two short years in the areas of Infrastructure, Equipment & Finance; Personnel & Professional Development; Curriculum & Programs, Professional Learning Communities & Educational Apps; Social Media, Communications Apps & Parent Programs; and Student Programs, Clubs & Activities, PTO and Educational Foundation. The findings were impressive and the district offered tremendous advantages to faculty and students regarding educational technology (See Appendix A.)

However, we live by the motto ***“If better is possible, good is not enough (Benjamin Franklin.)”*** We knew we could be better. We knew we needed to examine our use of technology from a fresh perspective as much had changed in two and a half years in technology in general, but even more so in educational technology. So, we framed our work around the following questions:

What is our vision for the students of the Chester School District?

What do we dream, hope and imagine their school experiences to be?

How can we ensure that they are prepared for 21st Century Careers that haven't even been invented yet?

How can we be certain that they are competent in digital literacy and prepared to excel in all areas of the STEM subjects?

How can we make smart decisions that will empower our students as they travel the road toward success in all areas of their lives?

The charge of the Technology Committee was to study and foster best practices in educational technology throughout the school district. Initially, the challenge was to simply paint a comprehensive picture overall of how technology was used, not used, and needed to be used by our faculty, staff and students. How could we move from technology integration to complete technology infusion in every program, at every grade level, at all three schools in the district?

Before that process could begin, we needed to find a common vision and a common understanding of what our goals were for the children of Chester. We spent a good deal of time discussing our vision and various stakeholder statements and coalesced around the following:

**Chester School District Strategic Plan for Technology Final
Vision Statement**

The Chester School District envisions a learning environment where motivated students, parents and faculty members are able to learn side-by-side around the clock and it is understood and valued that learning occurs at all times and in all settings. Technology and digital literacy is essential to learning and facilitates creativity in problem solving and in all academic and artistic endeavors. Form will follow function and students will have access to a variety of devices and apps purposed around accomplishing authentic learning goals. Instruction will evolve as students become fully self-directed, creative, thoughtful and analytical in determining how they can employ and adapt technology to problem solve in new and inspired ways.

At our initial meeting in November of 2014, committee members chose the sub-committees they were interested in pursuing. The sub-committees were chaired by our school district administrators and each group began their work by conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of their topic area. A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project (Wikipedia, 2015.)



Sub-Committee Action Plan Goals

The sub-committees met over the next several months to share the results of their SWOT analysis and to prioritize their goals and objectives for the strategic plan. The results of each sub-committee report and their action plan goals are contained in the following section.

Curriculum & Programs, Professional Learning Communities, and Educational Apps

Sub-Committee

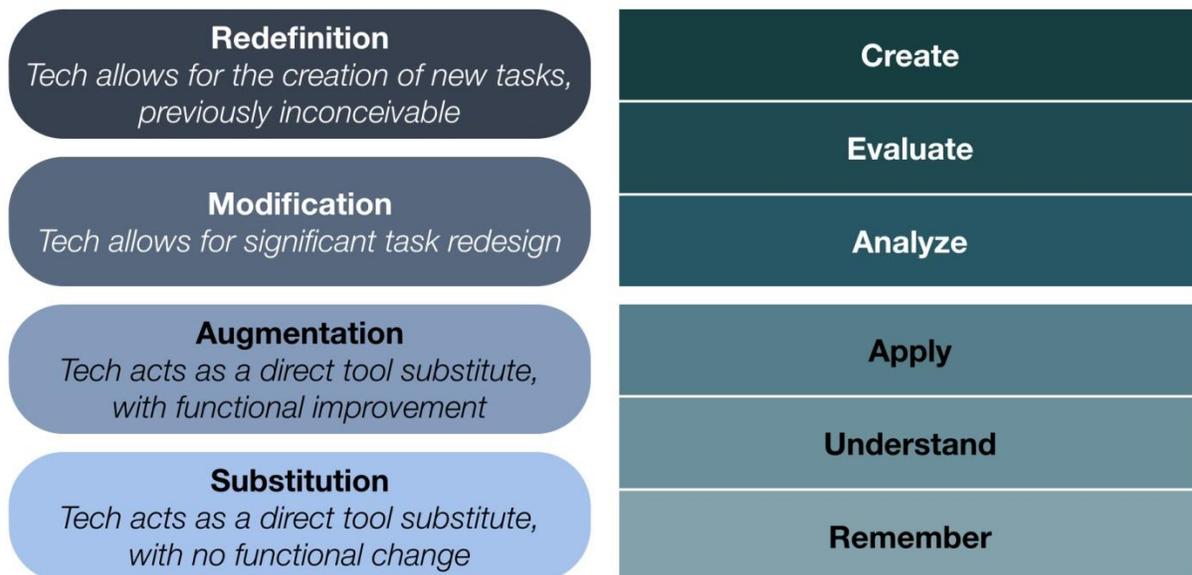
The Curriculum & Programs, Professional Learning Communities, and Educational Apps Sub-Committee recognized that curriculum and instruction is at the heart of the school district and affects absolutely everything that we do around teaching and learning. The Sub-Committee identified the following goals during their SWOT analysis.

Identified as Goals & Opportunities:

- Constant inventory of tools used for what purpose and how they are used
- Tie technology use to CCSS
- Model school with frequent visitations
- Student to student teaching, peer to peer; working together
- Kids writing and presenting curriculum
- Turn classrooms into inquiry based classrooms
- Start small and then move on from there
- Additional on-line learning opportunities, i.e. Kahn Academy
- Teachers supervising the learning is much more dynamic
- Google classroom allows for collaboration
- Deeper assessments of individual students
- Vacation Day Classrooms, etc.
- More in depth learning

Most germane to this sub-committee is the foundational belief that Curriculum is a living document and must be continually monitored, evaluated and revised. We also widely agreed that the SAMR Model was a best practice framework that we should center our work around allowing teachers and students to continue their own growth and development from the simple skills of technology used as substitution, to technology employed to redefine the task in a way that simply was not available before.

In his blog, *SAMR and Bloom's Taxonomy* of September 24, 2014, Dr. Reuben Puentedura, provides an excellent and thorough comparison of the SAMR Model for technology use to Bloom's Taxonomy for Higher Order Thinking Skills (Puentedura, 2014.) This is a highly efficient comparison that can help teachers easily access and understand the progression of technology skills and usage as all teacher preparation programs begin with Bloom's Taxonomy as a foundational premise of student learning.



As an organizational framework for the many suggestions offered by the committee, we utilized the following to help prioritize our goals. This list is meant to be merely presumptive, not prescriptive, and goals and objectives were added in the fall of 2015 as the sub-committee creates an Action Plan to meet our student and faculty needs. Due to the rapid advancement and evolution inherent in technology, our goals and objectives are fluid in nature, intent, and depth and will be amended as needed.

<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Programs</u>	<u>Professional Learning Communities</u>	<u>Educational Apps</u>
<p><i>Revise the CSD curricula to reflect the new CCCS in Technology</i></p> <p><i>Revise the CSD curricula to reflect the new CCCS in 21st Century College and Careers</i></p> <p><i>Consider Google Classroom as an organizational tool for all classroom teachers</i></p> <p><i>Utilize the SAMR Model as an organizing framework for advancing students and teachers in their technology applications</i></p> <p><i>Research and design technology assessment methods to ensure that students and faculty members continue to apply, advance and grow their skills</i></p>	<p><i>Create new STEM class for Bragg Schools 3-5 Students</i></p> <p><i>Create MAKER Spaces in all three schools</i></p> <p><i>Create additional on-line learning opportunities for students</i></p> <p><i>All technology classes will include coding at an age appropriate level</i></p> <p><i>Projects will be designed across every grade level, and assessed accordingly to allow for students to demonstrate mastery of digital learning and technology infusion</i></p> <p>STANDARDIZE PROCEDURES AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCES ACROSS INDIVIDUAL CLASSROOMS, GRADE LEVELS, SCHOOLS, AND THE DISTRICT</p>	<p><i>Continue the work of the PLC Teacher groups and encourage a continued focus on infusing technology across all areas of the school district</i></p> <p><i>Emphasize how many of our original PLC groups designed their work around measuring the effects of technology on student achievement</i></p> <p><i>Continue to utilize Google Docs to track all of our PLC work and outcomes</i></p>	<p><i>Ensure that form follows function (Sergiovanni) and that apps and equipment are chosen around the needs of our students and their educational programs</i></p> <p><i>Allow students access to a variety of technology tools and applications according to their learning needs</i></p> <p><i>When choosing educational apps and programs, consider the impact on student privacy and security</i></p> <p><i>Keep an ongoing inventory of what is being used in each classroom by our teachers and students to allow for common tools for learning</i></p>

Social Media, Communications Apps and Parent Programs Sub-Committee

The Social Media, Communications Apps and Parent Programs Sub-Committee recognized that social media and communications was more important than ever before in the world as we know it and the needs in this area are changing rapidly. The Sub-Committee identified the following goals during their SWOT analysis.

Much of their work focused on additional communications apps and tools that the district could benefit from utilizing.

Identified as Goals and Opportunities:

- Electronic Backpack ~ Debut in Fall of 2015 (All Schools Have One)
- iTunes and Android App for the District and Schools
- District Wide Hashtag (Have contest to determine what it will be) Logo (Redesign) ~ Use for Spirit Wear and Athletics as well
- Letterhead Consistent among all three schools Do we have ability to have an online database for each student?
- Test out form function on website (possibly items online?)
- All schools have social media presence on a consistent basis
- Mendham HS Athletic Form Page ~ <http://www.wmmhs.org/subpage.asp?mainID=20> (Needs to be more clean at BRMS) Concussion Form every other year
- Online Dismissal Form? What are the legalities

As an organizational framework for the many suggestions offered by the committee, we utilized the following to help prioritize our goals. This list is meant to be merely presumptive, not prescriptive, and goals and objectives were added in the fall of 2015 as the sub-committee creates an Action Plan to meet our student and faculty needs. Due to the rapid advancement and evolution inherent in technology, our goals and objectives are fluid in nature, intent, and depth and will be amended as needed.

<u>Social Media</u>	<u>Communications Apps</u>
Increase the use of social media to allow for a paperless district Research and visit other schools to help determine additional best practices for implementation Brand CHESTER Streamline communications processes	Virtual Backpack iTunes and app for Chester District hashtag Redesign logo and letterhead Add form function to web site Allow for on-line dismissal forms STANDARDIZE COMMUNICATION TOOLS ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Student Programs, Clubs & Activities, PTO and the Educational Foundation of the Chesters

The Student Programs, Clubs & Activities, PTO and Chester Ed Foundation Sub-Committee recognizes that student life is vital to any school system and educational program as we seek to focus on raising the whole child to be a productive and contributing member of the 21st Century. In addition, the generosity of our PTO and our Educational Foundation of the Chesters make the majority of our student life experiences possible. This is especially true regarding their generous donation of technology to the school district and their various grant programs throughout the school year.

The Sub-Committee completed their SWOT analysis and uncovered the following goals in great detail:

Identified as Goals and Opportunities:

- Utilize Minecraft and game-based learning to progress student learning both inside and outside the classroom.
- Minecraft.Edu would be a great fit in Ancient Civilizations @ BRMS (ie building the pyramids, ancient Rome, etc). [NYT: Disruptions: Minecraft, an Obsession and an Educational Tool](#) , [Edutopia: Using Minecraft in the Classroom](#), [PBS: Is Minecraft the Ultimate Educational Tool?](#)
- [FLL Robotics Team](#) (age 9-14), JR FLL Robotics (age 6-9)
- BRMS offers many great clubs. However, some of the STEM clubs are scheduled on the same day. Would be great to shift scheduling so interested students don't have to choose between Tech Detectives, Robotics, Solar Sprints, DI etc. but could attend them all.
- [CoderDojo](#) (incorporate into Tech Club or offer as a community activity and include parents)
- [Arduino, Raspberry Pi?](#) -
- Math & Science Competitions: Many NJ schools participate in programs such as [Math Counts](#), [Math Olympiad](#), [Science Olympiad](#), [Verizon App Development Contest](#) etc. (I'm sure there are more) - Dickerson, Bragg and BRMS should too. I understand that attendance was low when "math club" was at BRMS last year. However, I think we should try to relaunch it and make it more appealing.
- NASA club - I believe our district has some teachers that went through NASA training - so many kids are fascinated by this topic - would be a great topic to cover in science and/or as a club.

- Makerspace (not sure if this belongs in the schools or should be a community resource. Many [public libraries in NJ](#) have added Maker Spaces and there is lots of grant funding available. [NJ Makers Day March 21](#).)
- Not saying we should necessarily follow suit, but it is interesting to see what other districts are doing: [Denville STEM Lab](#) [Chatham STEM](#)
- Provide comprehensive list to our students of summer STEM opportunities, camps, programs, grants etc.
- Figure out a way that we can have a K-8 computer club where older students can help younger students (maybe have Bragg/Dickerson parents drive students to BRMS or vice versa?)
- Offer more sessions of tech club by providing more stipends for teachers
- Offer a variety of tech clubs-STEAM, building, coding etc`
- Look at WMMHS club and activity offerings; (1) check for clubs that may not be offered at BRMS, but might make sense to start at middle school level, (2) for clubs that exist at both WMMHS and BRMS, reach out to WMMHS club coordinators to maximize continuity
- Use Summer as a way to begin clubs and survey interest
- Explore the possibility of how clubs are offered (when are the 20 hours? all fall? all spring? once/twice weekly?)

As an organizational framework for the many suggestions offered by the committee, we utilized the following to help prioritize our goals. This list is meant to be merely presumptive, not prescriptive, and goals and objectives were added in the fall of 2015 as the sub-committee creates an Action Plan to meet our student and faculty needs. Due to the rapid advancement and evolution inherent in technology, our goals and objectives are fluid in nature, intent, and depth and will be amended as needed.

<u>Student Programs, Clubs and Activities</u>	<u>PTO and the Educational Foundation of the Chesters</u>
<p>Continue to develop and expand the interests of our students</p> <p>Create well rounded 21st Century learners with a wide variety of skill sets</p> <p>Provide students a pathway to see how technology is infused into almost all aspects of modern day life and learning</p> <p>STEM class at Bragg</p> <p>STEM experiences at Dickerson School</p>	<p>Continue the work of the BOE/PTO/EF Committee when examining potential clubs and activities</p> <p>Allow for a representative from the Tech Committee to review Ed Foundation grants to ensure fit with overall committee goals if they are tech related</p> <p>Ensure that clubs and activities are not solely tech driven, but also allow for the arts and humanities</p> <p>Emphasize QUALITY over QUANTITY</p>

<p>Student Interest Survey</p> <p>Offer age appropriate activities</p> <p>Improve coordination of clubs and communication of available opportunities</p>	
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Personnel and Professional Development Sub-Committee

The Personnel and Professional Development Sub-Committee recognizes that highly effective teachers and administrators are at the backbone of every successful school district. Nowhere is this greater than in Chester. Simply looking at the number of faculty members that volunteered to be a part of this committee, or examining the work of our Professional Learning Communities is a testament to how committed our Chester School District faculty is to advancing students and faculty learning, in a manner that is entirely cognizant of what students will need to succeed in the 21st Century.

Our Personnel and Professional Development Sub-Committee examined the following goals in their work:

Identified as Goals and Opportunities:

- Teachers observing teachers implementing technology – classroom visits
- Highlight a teacher on a particular grade level to share with faculty members on PD days
- Provide professional development during team meetings/faculty meetings
- Hire a tech coach at BRMS
- Secure a baseline of technology instruction and implementation teachers must do during their lessons- follow up with administrative monitoring
- Include a percentage of professional development hours to be related to technology
- Organize a Hackathon to raise money- we could have a variety of topics covered- coding, robotics, apps- invite parents and siblings
- Investigate professional development opportunities at Rutgers/other universities
- Continue and enhance partnership with universities, Rutgers

As an organizational framework for the many suggestions offered by the committee, we utilized the following to help prioritize our goals. This list is meant to be merely presumptive, not prescriptive, and goals and objectives were added in the fall of 2015 as the sub-committee creates an Action Plan to meet our student and faculty needs. Due to the rapid advancement and evolution inherent in technology, our goals and objectives are fluid in nature, intent, and depth and will be amended as needed.

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Professional Development</u>	<u>Instruction</u>
<p>Consider Governance Model for Technology Committee and Technology throughout the district</p> <p>Instructional Technology Coach at BRMS</p> <p>STEM Teachers for Dickerson and Bragg</p> <p>Library Media Specialists and GT teachers involved in creation and utilization of MAKER Spaces throughout all three schools</p>	<p>Teacher Leadership Model of Instructional Technology Coaches should be continue and utilized even further</p> <p>Instructional Technology Coaches can provide technology assistance and PD at faculty meetings on a regular basis</p> <p>Teacher Professional Development Technology Institute should be created to measure, monitor and advance the skills of our faculty</p> <p>University partnerships, like our work with Citelighter, should be sought, enhanced and further developed</p> <p>Teachers should engage in visitations to other classrooms and districts to learn more best practice strategies and applications</p> <p>Balance between in-district PD and out-of-district PD should be sought, along with a strategy of maximizing both</p>	<p>CONSISTENT APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY INFUSION ACROSS ALL CLASSROOMS, GRADE LEVEL, SCHOOLS AND THE DISTRICT</p> <p>Teacher lesson plans must reflect technology integration</p> <p>More time to be found for teachers to learn</p> <p>Teacher assessment must be developed</p> <p>Each quarter should reflect a strategy, instruction and an assessment for digital learning</p> <p>Google Classroom should be utilized among all district classrooms as a management system</p>

Infrastructure, Equipment and Finance Sub-Committee

The Infrastructure, Equipment and Finance Sub-Committee recognizes that a strong infrastructure, proper financing and equipment maintenance is essential to building an exemplary technology program. The goals articulated by the Infrastructure, Equipment and Finance Sub-Committee SWOT analysis was as follows.

Improvements / Projects:

- New server hardware and redeployment of existing hardware to improve the District's overall server infrastructure - This increased the systems' resilience against hardware failures, increased overall storage capacity, and provides capabilities for prototyping future IT initiatives.
- Replaced infrastructure backup solution for disaster avoidance - Provides both local and remote data recovery, including full server restoration into the cloud.
- Active Directory (AD) Migration to new Forest – Replaced *damaged* AD with the most current Microsoft Active Directory iteration.
- Implementation of Windows Deployment Services; replaced the dated process of Ghosting and eliminated the associated licensing costs - Reduced over-head from hardware specific deployment images. Eliminated human-error which can harm the stability of AD.
- Implementation of Windows Software Update Services; eliminated licensing costs associated with Deep-Freeze and ensures all Microsoft Products are updated regularly
 - Integration of Student Enrollment, via StudentSync, to AD – Fully automates student account creation, removal, and roll-ups, ensuring AD student body is always synchronized from PowerSchool.
 - Implementation of Google Active Directory Sync (GADS) and Google Apps Password Sync (GAPS) – GADS maintains Group Creation/Membership from AD in Google Apps. It also maintains User accounts and profile details from AD. GADS keeps user account password management 'in-house', sourced from AD.
 - Replaced VoIP Phone System – Eliminates 'in-house' hardware infrastructure.
 - Deployed Watchguard Firewall, replacing the aging Sonicwall Firewall – Improved perimeter virus detection, more robust content filtering, integration with AD, improved reporting regarding internet usage, and providing a VPN solution for staff.
 - Watchguard APT Blocker - goes beyond signature-based antivirus detection, using a cloud-based sandbox with full system emulation to detect and block advanced

- malware and zero day attacks
- iPad management via Meraki – an ongoing project slated to be completed during the 2015 summer.
- Inventory and Asset Management tracking has improved – technology disbursement throughout the District is now at 100%.
- Migrated SPAM filtering from Postini to Google Apps
- Implementation of Google Vault – Archiving of all emails for 10 years (no cost)
- Depreciated use of shared accounts for Student logons for grades 3 to 8

Planned Improvements:

- Consolidation of WiFi Networks, possible replacement of wireless APs
- Improvements to Firewall Authentication for Internet Access
- Implementation of Resource Calendars for Computer Carts, iPads and Computer Lab at Bragg – Usage to begin in September 2015
- Upgrade to BusBoss, transportation system
- Switching upgrades to replace aging 10/100 switches
- Possible replacement of routing and switching infrastructure

Proposed Future Initiatives:

- One to one Chromebook deployment at Black River Middle School
- Redeployment of all student laptops to Bragg and Dickerson Schools
- Increase available technology for instruction and PARCC testing
- Assist Valerie Fund with deployment of VGo Robot
- Implementation of biometric time clocks and management application
- Lease Purchase of Infrastructure – Wireless Access Points/Wired Switching
- MAKER Spaces in each school
- STEM/STEAM – obtain technology for teaching coding, robotics, etc.

As an organizational framework for the many suggestions offered by the committee, we utilized the following to help prioritize our goals. This list is meant to be merely presumptive, not prescriptive, and goals and objectives were added in the fall of 2015 as the sub-committee creates an Action Plan to meet our student and faculty needs. Due to the rapid advancement and evolution inherent in technology, our goals and objectives are fluid in nature, intent, and depth and will be amended as needed.

Infrastructure, Equipment and Finances

Replace Sonic Wall with Watch Guard. Sonic Wall cannot block apps. Watch Guard will allow us to block apps and control various components of the apps.

Upgrade wired infrastructure. Current switches are 7 yrs. old.

Software for projecting from iPad

Upgrade wireless system – eliminate controller and use cloud based Meraki

Utilize tech coaches as our best resource for professional development

Use capital to purchase wired system

Lease to purchase Meraki System

Chapter Six

Strategic Planning 2018

Open Public Forum #1

Our initial meeting with Commissioner Hesper and Dr. Butcher took place in May 2017 when they visited the Chester Board of Education and shared the processes and procedures they would undertake to lead the district through this strategic visioning process. Once it was determined that the Board of Education and the leadership team welcomed the opportunity to join with them in this strategic visioning process, they held their first Open Forum meeting on October 12, 2017.

At the Open Forum meeting, they shared two presentations to help participants understand the history of the Chester School District and to help lead participants through a SWOT analysis of the district strengths and weaknesses. A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project (Wikipedia, 2015.)

A script used to guide the meeting may serve as a framework for what was accomplished and can be found in Appendix A. The first presentation detailed the processes and procedures for the Strategic Planning yet to come. It can be seen in Appendix B. Finally, the second presentation encapsulated the most recent data available on the Chester School District and can be found in Appendix C titled EDUCATIONAL SNAPSHOT – What the Data Say.

Comments and discussion topics that were pursued at Open Public Forum #1 can be found in the minutes below.

Comments/Feedback from Open Public Forum #1

The following are summaries of public comments to the questions posed at the Strategic Planning Community Forum 1 on October 12, 2017.

1. What does the district do well?

Parent – The district prepares children well for the rigors of high school and prepares students well for AP classes. Projects in middle school prepare students for the project

based learning in high school. In this regard, experiences in middle school are very important.

Staff member- Learning experiences are collaborative and individualized. District is paying attention to student needs and adapts instruction accordingly.

Board member- administrative staff is innovative and focused on best practices. Teaching staff are committed and accomplished.

Parent- The district prepares students to advocate for themselves and in how they can get help academically.

Parent- College tours that they have been on advise them that schools should be future focused. Having good school environments is an important part of school success. The district's school buildings are an important accomplishment and advantage for the students and community.

Staff member- students throughout their career in the district are focused on growth mindsets. Students are also socially prepared for the rigors of the curriculum especially working in groups and teams.

Staff member- teachers have excellent coaches available to them.

Board member- special education programming is very important to student success and families move in from out of district due to the quality of these programs.

Parent- district has a culture of innovation to support students.

Staff member- the district supports a safe environment and a culture of responsibility and support for each other.

Staff member- the district has a very inclusive environment.

Staff member- Students are well rounded and are exposed to a wide range of academic and social programs. The district supports them in the risk taking that is part of learning.

Board member- STREAM focused curriculum (reading and arts are also important and should be emphasized).

Staff member- the BOE is focused on governance/guiding and not micromanaging which is important to empowering administrators.

Board member- board members appreciate the collaborative mindset in the district.

Staff member- board members have longevity that allows for a good governance approach. The district is always pushing the envelope and trying new ideas and establishing higher expectations.

Parent- the district has an involved, insightful parent base with support from foundation and PTO organizations. These organizations are also very helpful in communicating with the public.

Parents- The parents indicated that they have three children attending school in the district with similar positive experiences. Children get to school without issue- very positive experience.

Board member- technology is awesome in the schools. The district has emphasized investments in infrastructure. Indicated that the real credit goes to the staff and teachers in using the technology effectively and trying new ideas. Students must learn and think differently and technology helps fulfill those expectations.

Staff member- teachers are excellent collaborators in using the new technologies and in relying on students as well as support staff to learn themselves.

Staff member- the district is successful in providing support for struggling learners and supporting their progress.

Staff member- the district has put time, efforts and collaboration into student safety initiatives.

2. Are your students being prepared for the rigors of college and careers?

Group- the group provided a consensus answer of “yes”

Staff member- The district needs to focus on multiple pathways to careers in addition to traditional college route.

3. District Needs- what one thing would you change about the district?

Staff member- learning spaces still present challenges in terms of reflecting a 21st century classroom – both academically and in terms of the facility.

Staff member- it would be desirable to spend some more time outside focused on a project based lesson plan.

Staff member- the district needs to provide a pathway for students who are not focused on pre-college by providing career experiences and exploration.

Board member- business exploration and corporate experiences are also an important part of the career focus.

Staff member- it will be important for the district to change declining enrollment trends and to seek revenue enhancements.

Staff member- available spaces are used for such things as staff and pre-school.

4. Greatest Challenges Facing the District?

Staff member- declining enrollments present challenges in removing opportunities for academics- programs, schedules, facility usage.

State member- bumping up against budgetary limitations established by the State due to declining enrollments and the impact of the Administrative Salary Cap.

Board member- cost of maintaining facilities goes up every year and cost comparisons will become an issue.

Staff member- competition will increase including private preparatory schools in the area. How many in the community understand the accomplishments of the district's schools?

Staff member- Special education tuition revenues increase every year.

5. External Environment Challenges Facing the District

Board member- trends in demographics will present challenges to the district in terms of specialized programs. There is also a correlation between demographics and Title 1 funding changes.

6. What can be done to ensure that the strategic planning is informed by the perspectives of special groups in the communities- LEP; poverty, special education?

Staff member- staff is well connected with the families they serve. For example, district surveyed families to determine who did not have access to internet and district helped them with Chromebooks and internet access.

Chapter Seven

Open Public Forum #2

During the second Open Public Forum meeting on November 16, 2017, approximately fifteen parents and faculty members attended. Much of the evening was spent articulating a new Mission and Vision Statement for the Chester School District. The meeting was highly productive and the group easily came to consensus on the new statements.

Mr. Hespe and Dr. Butcher noted the following at the meeting as the group even came to quickly coalesce around broad based district goals.

CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comments/Feedback from Public Forum #2

November 16, 2016

Approximately 15 parents, school staff, district leadership, and community members participated in the second community forum regarding the future of the Chester School District. The meeting started with a review of Forum 1 and the input received regarding the SWOT analysis including district challenges. The meeting then turned to a discussion of Mission, Vision and Values as the first step in the development of the strategic plan. The facilitators first provided functional definitions of what a Mission, Vision and Values are and discussed the importance of a well-defined statements.

Vision: The Dream

- Ideal of conditions: how things would look if the issues important to you were perfectly addressed
- One or more phrases or brief proclamations: they convey the district's dreams for the future
- Vision Statements should be:
 - Understood and shared by members of the community
 - Broad enough to encompass a variety of local perspectives
 - Inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort
 - Easy to communicate - short

MISSION: the what and why

- Describes what the group is going to do and why: is more concrete and more action-oriented
- Very broad: describes how your district might go about fixing the problems that it has noted: Statements are:
 - Concise
 - Outcome oriented

- Inclusive

Values/Beliefs

- Values: denotes the degree of importance of something or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do
- Beliefs: assumptions and convictions that are held to be true

The group then focused on the statements being currently used in the district. For example, Bragg’s “Lifelong Learners Succeeding in the 21st Century.”

The forum participants were then divided into groups that were asked to provide input on a number of questions that involved the District’s strategic direction. The first exercise involved revisiting the District’s Mission, Vision, and Values. The groups were given a copy of the current Mission, Vision and Values statements, and were provided with guidance on the definitions of those three terms.

The groups offered the following recommendations regarding the district’s mission, vision and values:

Vision/Mission/Values

Vision:

Group 1/2-

The Chester School District strives to promote a dynamic learning environment for all students, staff and community alike and where all stakeholders are actively involved.

Group 3-

Helping our children to become ALL that they can be
Lifelong learners succeeding in the 21st Century

Mission:

Group 1/2-

As a school community we will strive to provide:

- Challenging curriculum that prepares students to integrate into a globally diverse/21st Century workforce;
- Support for the emotional/social growth and well-being of all students;
- Critical thinking opportunities;
- Interactive environment with technological integration;
- Inquiry based learning that is student centered;
- A safe environment that fosters a love of learning where all students have the opportunity to excel;
- Responsible citizenship.

Values/Beliefs:

Group 1-

As a school community we believe:

- All students can be respectful, caring, productive members of our school community.
- Love of learning is a key component of student success.
- Students should leave school with the tools to succeed in future endeavors and to become responsible global citizens.
- All children can learn given an environment that is appealing and responsive to their learning and developmental needs.

The groups were then asked to provide guiding principles for developing future initiatives for the District. Each group was asked to write down 3-5 answers to the following questions: Over the next five years, on what should the District focus to better serve children or be more efficient? What is the desired future position of the schools?

The groups provided the following responses to the second exercise:

Broad District Goals

1. Engaging in continual curriculum refinement and alignment with State standards and 21st Century Career/College skills;
2. Develop strategies to allow the district to continue to provide the rich educational programming that has led to student success in the past in the face of declining enrollment and impact on the budget and taxpayers.
3. Community activities and programs to model and instruct students in the process of becoming active and engaged citizens in our democratic society.
4. School community continues to value programs and services that foster the social and emotional well-being of students from all backgrounds from all areas of the community. This includes engaging children and families in ways that our likely to reach and engage them.
5. An interactive environment where students and teachers can together drive innovation and learning.
6. The district must stay up to date in regards to current technological advances. There needs to be continual progressions in regards to the learning environments in order to be reflective of best practices requiring both professional development and cutting-edge technology. Need to marry both theory and practice (practicality) to have an impact on the classroom.

Throughout Open Public Forum #2, Commissioner Hesper and Dr. Butcher utilized another presentation to help lead our participants in the process of articulating their thoughts, ideas and suggestions as they wrote a Vision and Mission Statement and further articulated their beliefs about the district and education in general. This presentation was titled Chester Vision, Mission and Values and can be found in Appendix D.

Chapter Eight

Open Public Forum #3

The final Open Public Forum took place on December 11, 2017. At this forum, the focus was on finalizing the Vision, Mission and Values Statements that had been started in November. Once again, the group seamlessly reached consensus around the following:

Vision Statement

The Chester School District strives to help ALL children to become life-long learners capable of succeeding in the 21st Century and beyond and where all stakeholders are actively involved.

Mission Statement

As a school community we will strive to provide:

- **Challenging curricula that prepares students to integrate into a globally diverse, future oriented workforce;**
- **Support for the emotional/social growth and well-being of all students;**
- **Critical thinking opportunities;**
- **Interactive environment with technological integration;**
- **Inquiry based learning that is student centered;**
- **A safe environment that fosters a love of learning where all students have the opportunity to excel; and**
- **Responsible, informed and engaged citizenship.**

Values and Beliefs

As a school community we believe:

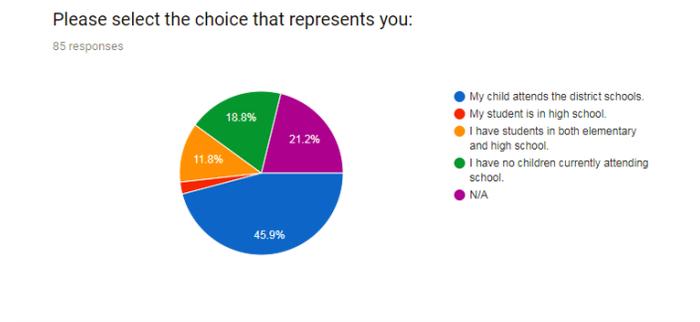
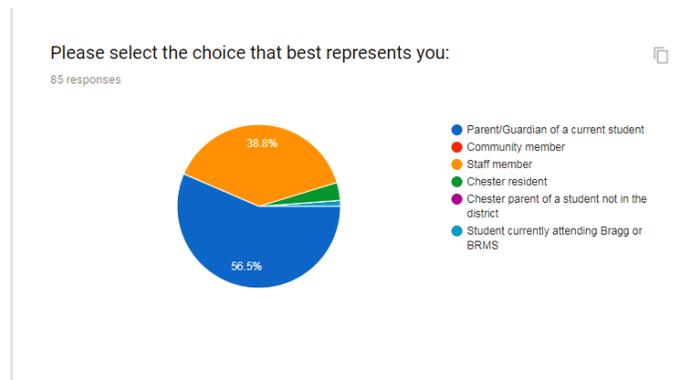
- **All students, staff and parents can be respectful, caring, productive members of our school community.**
- **Fostering a desire for lifelong learning is a key component of the success of the school community.**

- **Students should leave school with the tools to succeed in future endeavors and to become responsible global citizens.**
- **All children can learn given an environment that is appealing and responsive to their learning and developmental needs.**
- **As the district deploys to accomplish the above learning goals, the district will engage in a process of continual reflection to optimize the return on educational investment.**

Chapter Nine

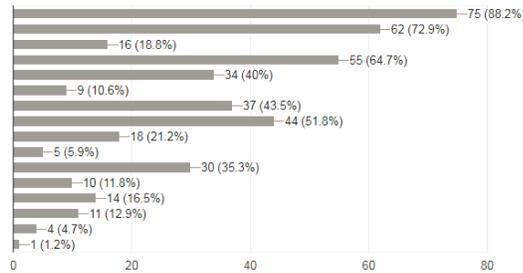
District Parent and Faculty Survey

The last opportunity for public input came in the form of an online survey widely distributed to all parents and faculty members in the month of December 2017. A copy of the questions can be found below. Also available is a long list of parent/faculty comments and suggestions that were instrumental in fostering the development of our Strategic Plan Goals. Most of the survey questions were open ended in nature leaving the comment section to be substantial and broad based. While informative, this style did make analyzing the data somewhat challenging. However, it is essential that we recognize and consider each and every comment.



Select the top five skills students must learn in order to be prepared for future success:

85 responses



What 3 Goals Would You Like to See Established for our District?

Goal 1 Responses

Student achievement (2)

Revamp learning spaces in all three buildings

Curriculum supervisor or director

Less screen time in school

Revamping learning spaces

Connect to community/state resources

Ensure every child is prepared academically and socially for success at university and beyond

Eliminate bullying in the district. HIB requirements should be enforced, even if the student in question has special needs.

Fair share resource allocation for GIST students; These students should have IEPs.

Best-in-class STEM programs

Inter school communication

No idea

Math league & math Olympiad for inter school competition as done in Millburn, Princeton, other middle schools (currently it's a vacuum)

Continued advancement of STEM programs, including classroom based work incorporated into the curriculum, and more computer science, typing, basic computer skills; as well as in after school programs (STEM club, Kinetics club, etc.)

Focus more on writing skills

Outstanding educational program that meets the needs of all students

Help each student discover their passion and enrich through all subjects.

More hands on learning less worksheets

Developing well rounded students with focused academics as well as emotional and social intelligence

Improve interpersonal skills

A challenging curricula that meets all children's needs, particularly the Gifted and Talented who for the most part are offered little more than enrichment and no true academic pathing to challenge them.

More individualized learning

Love of learning

Student accountability

More collaboration between schools and grade levels

Critical thinking, media savvy kids

development of enduring positive connections with peers (outside of best friends) for all students and staff

Reading, writing and arithmetic

Start a parent class/community on how we can help our children academically.

Developing interpersonal skills by having students work in groups where they must contribute and compromise.

Better STEM program

Creating future leaders who understand and amplify the value of the people around them

Resource room oversight - More progressive teaching there

Real world application of education materials

coordination of homework assignments + tests within the context of other school activities

Classes that combine subjects, project based learning to include service learning

Effective Communication within district

Balanced curriculum: Academics, STEM, the Arts, Languages.

Continue making writing and grammar a priority.

Increase teacher performance accountability

Prepare students for college and career readiness

A focus on encompassing the concepts of active citizenship across all curricular areas

Increase student involvement in the learning process.

Be a best-in-class district with hands on learning opportunities

Increase public speaking for students

Movement towards individualized learning for every student

Keep arts and music

More collaboration between students in different classes

Learning a second language for all students

Focus on communication skills (writing, public speaking)

Continued efforts for the 21st century learner

More stem-based after school opportunities, especially at elementary

Communication with staff members to make sure Macro district wide decisions effect staff members on the micro level.

More attention given to scheduling special education teachers to support the same kids they have in class, outsider of class

At least an hour recess

Focus more of the curriculum on STEM related classes

Maintaining arts and music education in the district

Put cursive writing back into the curriculum.

keep pace with technology

Greater involvement of school/community

Workshops that promote interpersonal skills between the students
Fully prepare student to succeed in a highly ranked & recognized high school
Teaching excellence
Identifying and rewarding excellent teachers, (student/parent feedback needs to be considered), while remediating or removing teachers that consistently get low marks. Finding a better way to evaluate teachers , i.e., performance and effectiveness in engaging students, rather than child test scores
Teachers that actually teach lessons, rather than just play videos on the smart board should be rewarded.
National leaders in technology in the classroom
Create well-rounded students who are set up for future success
BRMS scheduling - back to block
More opportunities for problem based learning
Maintain "School to Watch" status of BRMS
Promote excellence and creativity in education through high standards and flexible learning paths
Provide every student, no matter what level, the most challenging and comprehensive education.
Problem solving or Project based learning assignment
more collaboration between the 3 schools
Smaller class sizes and "leveled" classes for ILA, Math and Science
Advanced leveled classes for all subjects
Better communication
All students receive the necessary supports to be successful in reaching school goals.
New and better principal at BRMS that treats students with respect.
Development of programs that promote the growth of well-rounded individuals
Maximize academic achievement by offering more individualized attention and assistance, particularly to those who are in (or score close to qualifying for) CAAP.
Expand the gifted and talented program to a classroom environment setting beginning in 3rd grade, rather than the current enrichment-like program that is offered.
Focus on Student achievement by maximizing the performance of each student in all academic areas.
Improved communication skills both written and oral

Goal 2 Responses

Fiscal focus on students (2)
Civics class offerings
PD on differentiation classroom structures
Focus on kindness and compassion, empathy and helping others, rather than (anti) bullying
Auditorium at BRMS
Cross class/discipline projects
Foster a sense of community and kindness amongst the student body - zero tolerance for bullying

Everything online; No more paper forms to fill out - everything from field trip permission slips to acknowledgment of test scores may be done online.

Continue efforts to be named a school to watch

Anti-bullying and teaching social media/privacy best practices

Parental academic support

No idea

Chess club and/or science Olympiad

Continued investment in new and emerging technologies, to prepare our children for a digitally enabled world

Focus on interpersonal and social skills

the best teaching staff

Teach Responsibility, Integrity, Grit, Resilience.

Project based learning to reflect 21st century

Safe environment for our students and teachers

Be able to listen and respond to others

Outstanding teachers who are willing to try to different methodologies to unlock the potential in all students, since great teachers know that children learn differently and one size does not fit all

More interdisciplinary learning

Innovation

Student motivation

Update all learning spaces- furniture, cleanliness, floors/walls and create new ones (outdoor)

continuity for families in the district for planning

rotation for all grade level students through related arts units of social skills / peer relationships

Creativity and imagination

Incorporate some sort of daily morning physical activity.

Help recognize each student's strengths and weaknesses and know how to enhance each .

More qualified math teachers

Enable our young people with the hard and soft skills they need to be successful adults who change the world for the better

Less emphasis on tests/testing/test alerts

Emphasis on engineering and sciences

elimination of hard cover textbooks in favor of electronic media

More focus on environmental stewardship (gardening, composting, recycling,) including outdoor learning spaces

Teaching Logic/Critical Thinking

Fix the infrastructure: heating/cooling, roof, etc.

Encourage creative arts

Increase enrollment

Provide character education and citizenship opportunities

More finely differentiated future oriented career and college pathway options.

Increase student rate of reading/comprehending.

Increase organizational skills

Maintaining a caring, nurturing learning environment

Provide tech support

More student driven learning.

Data analysis for all students

work closely with the high school to ensure class placements in the correct level courses for each student (aligned with particular student's goals)

Teaching to the individual and whole student w/o an emphasis on test scores

Continue to advance technology

Public speaking PD for staff members

More attention given to a vertical team effort in teaching Language Arts; In other words, an increase in articulation between skills taught per grade.

At least an hour recess

Create more opportunities earlier in Dickerson for kids who are performing above grade level

Incorporating mind body exercises into the curriculum to combat the stress of school as children's workload increases as they move up in grades.

Fix the grounds so they can be utilized at any time of the year.

encourage our students to become leaders through educational & extracurricular activities

Facilities study of space and usage/overall maintenance and upkeep

Through the use of technology improve comprehension skills.

Well-rounded education

Educational collaboration; Making sure that there is collaboration among teachers in all of the schools so that any gaps in the curriculum from grade to grade can be identified and addressed (particularly in math). Identifying best practices and lessons that have been effective and inspirational to the children and sharing them - actual teaching and demonstrations, NOT videos!!

Improved facilities for mind, body and spirit

Differentiate learning for students

A new gym/multi-purpose room with a stage (BRMS)

Continue to infuse technology in student learning

Achieve/maintain a well-balanced curriculum creating well-rounded students (not too heavy on any given subject leaving other subjects lacking).

Foster initiative and responsibility through independent and group learning opportunities

Provide well educated and motivated teachers that share goal number #1.

21st century building and classroom environments

more collaboration within the each school

Employ teachers with degrees/training in subject matter

Teachers qualified and eager to teach their subject

More meetings on math and reading/writing

Establish a school wide climate of acceptance and positive supporter all students.

Development of programs that develop critical thinking skills in children

Implement ways to engage students in their learning and teach concepts including home economics and financial responsibility.

Offer more classes at BRMS that count towards High School graduation credit.

Hire and retain high quality teaching staff that will create, innovate, and implement best practices to foster student growth and address the diverse needs of students.

Practical applications such as banking skills, addressing a letter, financial planning

Goal 3 Responses

Focus on applied learning (2)

New auditorium at BRMS

More inclusive environments

More hands on and outdoor learning, less worksheets

Fiscally responsible

two semester system replacing 4 marking periods to allow for longer project based learning

Provide programs that develop every child's gifts - whether academic, artistic, athletic, etc

Students should not eat lunch on the floors in high school. This is not acceptable!!

Remove serial distracting and threatening students from general classroom settings where they damage the educational environment for all.

Important life skills (typing, financial management, listening, communicating, etc)

Motivation

No idea

Focus on keeping a higher curriculum standard to compete w other top Nj schools, consider having a vice principal: Mr. Currie @brms for half a day to help out

Special enrichment programs or other partnerships between the school district, and the community, local businesses, corporations, etc

Time management and study skills

the best facilities

Less technology, more thought and creativity without screens; Technology is a tool, not an end.

Abolish standardized testing

More school spirit and oneness.

Become better problem solvers

A culture of excellence; Too often it's considered acceptable if kids get C's or worse, which borders an environment of mediocrity that considers middle of the road behavior to be acceptable. In a competitive world where it will be challenging to succeed, kids need to be challenged to strive for excellence

Mentorship or real-life experiences

STEM

Togetherness / helping one another

Update non learning areas- bathrooms, cafeteria, etc

Creative and innovative education that emphasizes the arts and science

regular deep cleaning of classrooms & restrooms / replacement of water & sewage systems / successful ongoing pest control

Digital citizenship

Incorporate a typing class

Creativity in the arts should be enhanced with skill building.

Teaching organizational skills

Keep our kids safe

Stop segregation of "gifted" students and include as special ed is included

Technical skills, i.e. skilled trades like construction, architecture, etc. allow students to feel that college does not have to be their only option. Trade professions are needed and should be promoted to students as alternative post high school education.

reduction in emphasis on testing/scores + return to learning at a slower pace instead of trying to do too much work in too little time

Enhanced character development program to address undesirable behavior and its consequence

Well Rounded Education. Teach Civics, Economics, Philosophy

Competitive pay for staff

Provide opportunities for female leadership opportunities in STEM education.

Improve communication

Stay up to date with technology changes and advancements

Continuing the high quality of educational programming and opportunity in the face of steeply declining enrollment in a fiscally responsible manner

Put greater emphasis on citizenship; knowledge of American history.

Encourage students to relate and get along with each other

Keeping up with technological innovations

Understand developmental needs of students

More positive school exposure

Digital citizenship for all students

while integrating technology into their daily lives, students still greatly benefit from personalized, individual attention regarding their work, effort and progress

Attracting more families to the district

emphasis on morning meetings/ incorporation of stronger character-building moments in the classroom

the integration of the Arts in the STEM curriculum making it a STEAM curriculum

A periodic review of curriculum in content areas

More handwriting less typing

My daughter's 3rd grade teacher is teaching "Flip Math" this year which focuses less on worksheets and more on re-teaching. She is learning so much more and faster than her twin who has another teacher not using Flip Math. I would like the curriculum to get away from using so many worksheets and use a different method.

Strict anti-bullying agenda with limited smartphone use in school; Smartphones

Teacher raises for best practices. Just like administration!

target girls for STEM education

Curriculum design and implementation

Time management skills in the younger grades so they are more prepared for middle school.

Safe and happy students

Curriculum excellence; Making sure that the curriculum effectively accomplishes the educational goals

Making sure that the teachers are delivering that curriculum in the most effective way

Sharing best practices among teachers to teach topics; Using effective teacher aids, like the smart board, only as a supplement to teacher lectures and demonstrations

Immersive learning, too many of our kids live in a bubble.

Create an engaging, interactive learning environment for students

Electives such as Home-ec, wood shop, mechanics, etc

Update and maintain physical plant, including all learning areas
Create, document and share a concise school communication strategy with parents/guardians including: What information is shared where and on what frequency?; How do parents best communicate to school administration, teachers, etc.?; Who is the owner of each of the communication tools--e-backpack; Powerschool, website, etc.;
Inspire lifelong learning and a desire for community involvement in all areas from academics to the environment
Put just as much emphasis on learning the fine arts, a language, technology and STEM as the regular subject of Math, Science and Language Arts.
Leadership and community service programs
better professional development- going back to half days once a month
Sustain and grow the music, theater and art programs
Up to date material, such as newer textbooks
school staff events
Provide training & opportunities for staff members to collaborate on topics related to developing communication skills, creating positive student supports, and to enhance critical thinking skills
Development of programs that promote the growth of skills needed in the 21 century.
Maintain a safe environment to support both the physical and social/emotional health of students and staff.
Nothing more) It's great.
Follow best practices and perform valid quantitative analyses when making decisions.

What Do You Believe is Working Well in our District?

Technology (2)
My grandsons enjoy school (2)
Vast extracurricular opportunities and high academic standards
Communication with parents
Qualified, compassionate teachers
The staff provides a welcoming community to the learning environment for both parents and students.
Leadership
Excellent teachers and curriculum
Advanced math and advanced ELA classes challenge stronger students to realize their potential. We are in favor of standardized testing and the preparation for them. These skills are necessary for ACTs, GMAT, LSAT, interviews, etc. Life is about preparation/studying for specific results.
Arts programming, enrichment programming such as wax museum
Math, ILA & Science courses
Cohesiveness
Our students definitely are a community
Stem program
Nice job in starting to incorporate technology at the early stages of our childrens experiences in the district from PreK and K on up.

stem

Great teachers

outstanding programs - excellent superintendent who strives to keep up with the latest and most up to date methods- our board is very supportive

Teaching the Whole Child

Overall education

Excellent staff

Reading and Math

I think the arts programs are well run and important to well-rounded educational experiences. I think the clubs and activities are varied and offer opportunities for all students to participate.

Whole child education

Communications

Infusion of technology

The staff - dedicated teachers and support

technology teachers and support staff, CAAP, Music Program / instruction, Art instruction, Media Centers, School Office staff members, having a security consultant, alternative learning seating initiatives with purchase of furniture that is appropriate size for students

Attention given to all students

The focus on technology and systems both in the classroom but also with the resources for parents (apps, PowerSchool) is excellent. Great way to stay on top of what my child is working on and seek further info from the teacher if necessary

Reading is well taught. The small reading group is good focused learning. The extra help is available for those who need.

Extracurricular programs, such as TREP\$

My kids get the tailored attention they need to thrive

the wonderful atmosphere in the schools + caring teachers leadership

A good public education

Access to technology; philanthropy; reading program; band program

Collaboration at the grade level with curriculum goals

Technology instruction, safety, most teachers are fantastic!

We are ahead of the curve with technology and have multiple tools available to a variety of students.

Our faculty is outstanding! Our parent support, while not always visible, is very strong.

Technology

Good teachers and programming

Academics

Keeping class sizes manageable; Providing Chromebooks to all students

High educational standards

Professional learning communities

Communication with parents

Students are challenged at the highest levels available to them

Teaching model, financial stability, leadership

like the 1:1 chrome books, strong literacy program- both in classroom and support

The integration of arts during the students' day

social emotional climate for kids

Small class size

In general teachers are great and kids love to learn.

The incorporation of technology very early in our children's education so as to prepare them for the future

Quality of education that the teachers of Chester provide

Chromebooks

Excellence of faculty and technology

Interpersonal relationships between the teachers, paras and support staff

Many things! Core values, student engagement, use of technology, extra-curricular, music program, required reading, public speaking in class....many things.

The district has embraced technology, which can be both positive and negative. The use of google docs has been great for teachers and students in managing and sharing documents. clubs

Educating the whole child (cognitive, emotional, social, etc)

The students' knowledge level and skill in technology

Dedicate professionals, committed parents, shared visions

Really great, engaged teaching staff; Whatever you're doing to keep them engaged, great work and keep it up. They seem to really enjoy what they are doing and that reflects in our children.

the teachers and students have great rapport in general

I can't think of anything specifically that is working well!

Great teachers and great resources

google education

Music and Art programs; Math and ILA classes in Bragg & Black River

The music program in the middle school is excellent.

communication with parents

Dedicated staff, good technology infrastructure, supportive administration

The way teachers teach us.

Support for technology and the arts.

High level of family and community involvement

The music programs

Opportunities for parents' involvement, excellent resources for special needs kids, excellent teachers for most part

Teaching as opposed to movie watching

What Areas of Our School District Need Improvement?

Facilities (2)

Perhaps more application of learned skills (2)

Learning spaces need to updated

Curriculum

More visual arts - all year instead of one marking period!

Physical plant

The gifted and talented program should be expanded especially in the early grades - a 45 minute session 1x week per subject is not enough to provide the intellectual stimulation these children need to prevent them from becoming bored in class. It should be as important/frequent a program as the remedial/supplemental lessons the district provides to other students. The identification of gifted and talented students should also be more broad-based, rather than the single test score used currently in the younger grades.

Foreign language classes should strive to be "full immersion" - students can barely speak their foreign language after several years because so much English is used in the classroom.

Buildings and grounds improvements (leaking roofs, pothole drives); Drug education regarding opioid use; Monitoring misuse of Chromebooks; Cameras on school buses

Teaching life skills (e.g., typing, financial management, organization)

Inter school communication

No idea

Participate in Inter school math competitions

Continued advancement of STEM agenda, at all levels - These STEM fields will be critical for future success in the workforce, given the rapid changes and advancements we see in Technology

Food services!

staff is good but needs to meet the needs of all students -

More accountability for not finishing homework, on time; Responsibility and balance

Early childhood education

Cleanliness of the school updating older portions including bathrooms

None

The English program needs improvement. Not enough basic skills, proper writing technique and sentence structure. Basic punctuation is barely taught, nor is the ability to craft well-thought out essays. The math program relies too much on worksheets, videos and self-learning and not enough on actual instruction. Many, many kids in the district rely on math tutors to perform which says something is very lacking in the math teaching to require this intervention on the part of parents.

Less competitiveness

Challenge the norm

Use of resources correctly Helping the middle level academic students (so much is offered for higher level and lower level students)

Environment/space, more collaboration between buildings and grades, lack of subs and aids, scheduling which effect pull outs from related arts/specials, layout of BRMS office, Heating and air quality

Less focus on laptops

sinks and plumbing fixtures and pipes that are "aging out" and need to be completely replaced -persistent lack of substitute teachers -adequate appropriate available spaces for meetings with parents -dedicated supervised spaces which are appropriate for use by students who are removed from classroom settings -dedicated appropriate closets for storage of grade level curriculum materials (science kits, math kits, furniture) -renewal of attention to development of student handwriting skills

Healthy food options for school lunch (eliminating bad choices)

Focus on teaching to common core

I feel the physical education program could be enhanced by providing extra help to those who aren't naturally sporty. Also, keep expanding and improving on STEM programs.

Reading programs/bringing back the skill of cursive writing/Better technology classes

There doesn't seem to be any organization to extracurricular activities nor an accommodation for kids of working parents

Emphasis on testing/quizzes/unit tests; Stop the madness

less focus on homework

Service Learning

Innovation in thinking

Middle School general music; building maintenance; parental knowledge of what their child does all day

Planning time for long term goals and more time for enrichment experience in units

Bringing the IB ideals down to the elementary level

Incentives for all teachers to perform their best all year, for every student, and less long-term leaves of absence that interfere with consistency in the classroom

We need to find a way to provide all that we do now for our students in the face of declining enrollment and resources.

Greater emphasis on reading/comprehension

Communications between school and parents, parents and teachers, teachers and children

Increase physical activity if possible

Scheduling; If students had more individualized learning goals, they could adjust their schedules more efficiently for extra / enhanced / remedial purposes.

Understanding of the different needs of the k to 2 students

Social Studies curriculum (K-2)

more visible administrators

Writing skills, communications skills

Stabilizing enrollment

Need more opportunities for math support

communication directly with staff members

custodial!! The rooms/bathrooms are filthy

More recess, breakout classes for High achievers starting in elementary. show and tell for elementary. Public speaking is huge. Making parents feel welcome. Letting us eat lunch with our children. Lighter backpacks; Books are way too heavy!!having kids be able to go potty when they need too not twice a day.

STEM and advanced students need more attention

More anti-bullying curriculum and smartphone dangers; Too many children use smartphones as a weapon and we need to reinforce the detriment of these 2 things on a continual basis. A seminar once a year is not enough.

Infrastructure; Cleanliness, hot water, fix leaking roofs, Flat roofs etc...

Communication - it's very difficult to follow because the information is in multiple places and comes from multiple sources--electronic backpack, daily announcements, teacher pages, flyers sent home, etc. Communication from BRMS is almost non-existent.

We always seem to be short subs when needed. Getting a permanent sub in each building may be helpful.

More consistent quality of teaching at Bragg.....in other words, some teachers are known to teach more, more effectively and expect more of the students than other teachers. I always want my kids to have that kind of teacher.

There seems to be too much reliance on technology. I think that textbooks are still valuable in the Middle school, particularly in math and that only having access online is a mistake. In some cases, during power outages, or simply being away from a wifi area, means that children cannot access required work outside of school. I think spending so much time on screens at a young age can be harmful. Also, from what I am hearing from the children, some teachers use the smart board videos as a primary teaching tool, rather than a supplement to actual demonstrations or lectures/lessons.

technology -so far behind the mid-west!, facilities - so far behind the mid-west!

Opportunities for differentiated learning for students whose abilities are above grade level

Basic Skills at BRMS

Flexibility for all learning styles and abilities in every classroom; more substitutes

Clearer, more advanced communication; Everyone is busy and getting 1 weeks' notice or less for certain events/activities/requirements creates stress.

progressive thinking in terms of future world learning

I don't have one specific area, there is always room for improvement in every area.

BRMS building needs updating: the entrance and office is antiquated

more input from teachers on decisions that directly affect them- from curriculum to classroom moves and use of classrooms.

Science classes in BRMS - need to have separate classes in biology, physics and chemistry- in this day and age, these are foundational subjects and have to be strengthened. The reversion of 8th grade Science into one integrated class this year has been terrible and a complete failure as teachers are not doing a good job with the integrated science class.

Language arts and science classes need improvement. A more active health class would be better, too.

communication between staff

managing parent demands, creating programs where all students can be successful

School Principal at BRMS

Adequately funding in class support staff to allow fewer special needs students to be grouped together, and recruiting substitute teachers

Info previously listed in goals; (and there must be some way to have BRMS students get fresh air during hunting season).

Gifted and talented support

More resources for kids interested in additional STEM, music and arts activities.

If we could eliminate one program or initiative in our district, what would you eliminate?

Not sure (5)

None (4)

PARCC (2)

None (2)
N/A (2)
Life-time benefits for employees (2)
n/a (2)
not sure (2)
Second language
Core curriculum/Pearson math
Chinese
Assigned lunch seating
PARCC testing
PTO 24/7 fundraising
Student council at Bragg
Constantly upping curriculum
No idea
Non competitive Activity w lowest participation
Do not have a specific program in mind
Teaching to tests- PARCC etc
foreign language
nothing -everything is needed
Why would you ask this? This depends on a solid education for ALL students. What if I said "Pre-Calc?"
Standardized testing
While the PTO raises funds for some worthwhile programs, much of the assemblies and activities (particularly in K-5) are not value added. The money could be used for better purposes and some of the PTO practice seem very dated.
The double advances math program
Nothing
Testing
None that comes to mind
Chromebooks - seem more gimmicky than necessary
staff exercise space located in only one school building
Chrome books
Common Core
None; They are all important but if I had to choose, I would eliminate gym.
Music class should be an option, not mandatory, at Bragg. By this age the kids know if they enjoy music or would prefer a different class (like Stem).
Nothing
standard testing
Chinese
character education and other things that should be taught by the parents and not left to staff
Spelling seems like a bit of a waste in its current form. We can come up with a more modern way to accomplish spelling goas.
I would review all clubs and extracurricular activities for participation numbers to see if there is a cost savings there for our least popular options.
The GIST program
Fix math - curriculum is hard to learn

Too much computer time which students also get at home
Combine Health with Science curriculum, so there can be more P.E.
One to one chrome books at Dickerson
Not sure.
maker space
Nothing!
PLC's
Advisory in BRMS needs to be revised. It has become a program that students and teachers dread. It could be a wonderful thing, but not as it is now...
Gist and replace with high achievers as the test do not always get the kids. There are lots of children who can do the higher level work - challenge them
Infuse technology more within the library
Advisory in middle school - my daughter in 8th grade says it's ineffective. She is straight A, top of the class and I value her input.
I'm not sure that I know about all of the programs in order to answer this question. I only know about the ones my children have been involved in and have no complaints.
The calendars for elementary, middle and high school should have the same days off.
Eliminate unique calendars.
1:1 Chromebooks in Dickerson and Bragg - too much screen time too early for these kids
The "fitness room" at BRMS is a bit insulting. The equipment is outdated and filthy.
unknown
Can't think of any
Mandated testing and the grade teachers/schools get for it!
none
The current mentor program we have and replace with a completely different model (see below)
None at all- the district is barely covering the basics- if anything, maybe have either IB or AP in high school.
No programs need to be eliminated.
advisory
no comment
The continual adding of professional development initiatives; Between the ever-increasing state requirements and new initiatives, there is less time to devote to the needs of every student.
I have no idea
I cannot answer this question without doing a cost and benefit analysis.

If we could add one program or initiative in our district, what would you add?

More foreign language instruction in the younger grades
Love the middle school gifted and talented program. It would be great to see this expanded and possibly "mainstreamed" such that participants don't miss other classes to attend (they would attend specific G&T classes instead)

comprehensive GIST programing

See prior answers re: suggested goals

More staff

No idea

Math league/Olympiad, JV sports teams

Do not have a specific program in mind

More diversity

We do a lot already- make it a district goal that every child can read and write.

An Initiative I would add would be to develop a system to help students hand in their homework on time (keep up with homework) and be able to help the students when they fall behind. For example, after 2 homework are missing...no sports or clubs after school until it is done. They can stay after school in Homework club, with a qualified teacher, and get help. The students need to stay up to date. Also, the homework load needs to be focused (not too much) and appropriate.

Project based learning

More productive play to promote cooperation

Science labs in the lower grades

A program tailored to gifted and talented kids. Not simply enrichment, but a full path (including ILA, language, mathematics) to challenge their unique skills and abilities. GIST is an afterthought and not a well-structured program.

Stronger language arts earlier on

Computer coding

District wide policy on supporting or furthering the middle level students

Not sure

Additional language; Really very happy with the programs

It's a tossup overhaul of plumbing

Digital citizenship

Typing

Add to the arts. This sparks imagination and soothes the mind. Not just painting and drawing but creating, in many mediums. Love maker space for its possibilities.

Residency verification on an annual basis (I see school buses dropping children off at random locations, like the archery range on North Road. How do we know that our taxes are being used properly for Chester residents, and not residents of other towns?)

Soft skill development - kindness, care for others, empathy, etc

Nothing - seem where they should be

coordination of homework + tests with scheduling of all school activities

Program to teach students about NJ history and government process

Civics

A full-time librarian at both Bragg and Dickerson

Lincoln Center Arts Program

I feel like so much us offered for every type of learner and a variety of interests - no complaints!

Solid character education program, uniform throughout all classes

A middle school International Baccalaureate Program

More money spent on the social studies programs.

More STEM

public speaking

Only more hours in the day would help.

More music and arts assemblies

Not sure.

something speech or forensics related (public speaking skills)

Civic learning and community outreach requirements, sustainability awareness

More after school opportunities/clubs/activities for elementary students

Create more Performing Arts Spaces

Vertical Teacher Articulation

More recess or shorter day; It has been done and can be done - I have been in a high achieving school district that had at least an hour recess

Expand advanced pull out programs

Civics classes - so important in today's society

Coding at the K-2 level in computers

Additional Administrator at BRMS

Getting a permanent sub

Better solutions when Chrome books don't work. My daughter says the Tech Support Team just turns them on and off to "fix" them at Bragg. She has gone many days with a broken Chrome book and has waited for many "tech tickets" to be responded to.

I wouldn't necessarily add anything, but I wanted to say that I have been very impressed with the instrumental programs at both the Bragg and BRMS schools.

Administrators should travel to other states to observe top rated schools. I think it would be eye opening.

Additional busing so that middle school students don't have to get to school so early - these kids need their sleep to operate at their best!!

Monthly after school opportunities to include the entire student body - basketball or volleyball tournaments, bingo night, movie night, game night, etc

more time for playing

Leadership class/course/event/club

Independent learning courses

A program that would include things that kids need to know about everyday life; How to be responsible for finances, how to deal with peers/people, public speaking, etc

Leadership programs

a true mentor teacher program in which a master teacher works all year with a new teacher- the master teacher is given additional preps to be able to be in the new teacher's room at all different times of the day. There are model programs out there.

No need to add anything- just improve the curricula in Science (by separating out biology, physics and chemistry in middle school) and Social Studies, get teachers with degrees and training in subject matter, hire principals that actually care about curricula, teacher performance and student learning.

No programs need to be added.

nothing

emotional learning/community service requirement

None

Development of a "steam" rather than "stem" approach

Add more individualized support for CAAP and incorporate programs to teach life skills, home economics, financial responsibility, and healthy living.

See previous gifted and talented comments

I would add more STEM activities (e.g. currently chess and kinetics are wonderful, but I wish kids could attend them through the whole academic year).

not sure

Chapter Ten

2018 Strategic Plan Goals

Through over nearly a year of research, planning, various sources of input and analysis, the following goals emerged for our 2018 Chester School District Strategic Plan.

Goal One – Focus on new innovative learning spaces and methods of instruction to truly individualize learning.

- Establish new innovative instructional programs
- Extend student learning beyond the classroom
- Partner in additional ways with the high school to support experiential learning and multiple pathways to success in college and careers.

Other Ideas that Emerged from the Data

- Flip the classroom
- Entrepreneurial education and expansion of TREP\$
- More community collaboration on programs
- Additional after school activities and enrichment opportunities
- Creative learning spaces for students
- Programs that focus on leadership skills, i.e. public speaking skills
- Home economic programs
- Personalize learning and virtual learning, i.e. virtual classrooms on school closure days
- Expand differentiated instruction from Middle School International Baccalaureate Program to Tech/Vocational Education
- STEM Programs, Maker Spaces and Coding
- Experiential Learning aligned with high school programs
- Continue to develop reading programs
- Implement new technology as much as possible

Goal Two – Increase enrollment by marketing the school and community

- Outreach to business to provide a greater awareness of the desirability of the Chester schools and community in order to attract more families to move into town.
- Market the educational success of Chester as a standout district regionally, state-wide, nationally and globally with the intent of growing the district.

Other Ideas that Emerged from the Data

- Engagement and branding
- State of the art facilities
- Community involvement
- Provide more value to community members without children in the schools, i.e. use of facilities etc.
- Improved communication with high school scheduling
- Corporate outreach to create real world learning opportunities and general awareness of the district in the community.
- Highlight corporate connections, i.e. Google
- Strengthen and publicize ESL programs to attract multinational companies executives' families to the district
- Empower families and the community to be partners in students' educational success
- Increase enrollment through marketing of the schools to other communities

Goal Three - Support the social and emotional well-being of the whole child by engaging staff, parents and students.

- Continue emphasis on whole child development
- Consider creating district-wide Health and Wellness Committee comprised of various stakeholders

Goal Four - Strengthen our Educational Programs by Continuing the School District's Emphasis on Quality Professional Development for our Teaching Staff

- Teacher support to enhance effectiveness through coaching
- Remain on the cutting edge of technology through continued professional development and sharing including encouraging support for these efforts in the community
- Update learning spaces to continue to train staff and offer them incentives for improvement

Goal Five - Maintaining sound financial systems with a focus on continuous improvement in efficiencies to cope with declining enrollments while providing support for new innovative programs

- Maintaining sound financial systems with efficiencies while providing support for the new innovative programs
- Fiscal responsibility which is becoming more and more important with declining enrollments

Goal Six - Investing in updating and maintaining our physical assets in order to provide integrated and future oriented learning spaces in an effective and efficient manner

- Continuing our Green Schools Program with an emphasis on other areas than education
- Investing in updating and maintaining our physical assets in order to provide integrated and future oriented learning spaces in an efficient manner
- Maintaining sound financial systems with efficiencies while providing support for new innovative programs

Goal Six - Promote Civics and citizenship through curriculum and related activities involving students, staff and community members

- Reinvigorate the idea of citizenship through social studies
- Enhance citizenship in civic education curriculum
- Citizenship through community engagement

Chapter 11

Where Do We Go From Here?

At the Chester Board of Education Retreat on June 1, 2018, the Members of the Board of Education and the Leadership Team will examine the goals that emerged from the Strategic Planning process and determine how to translate those goals into three District wide Board Goals and additional Merit Goals for the Superintendent of Schools. The same process will be repeated for the years that the current Strategic Plan is in existence until all agreed upon goals have been accomplished.

At that time, the Board will consider if the goals as recommended dovetail with their expectations and aspirations for the children of Chester in the future. Goals may be eliminated, edited or added as such. When a series of goals are agreed upon, they will be Board approved for the upcoming school year and subsequent school years as necessary.

The Superintendent wishes to express her gratitude to the many members of the Strategic Planning Committee who shared their insights and expertise, hopes and dreams for our students, and their considerable enthusiasm and energy for preparing Chester's children for success in today and tomorrow's world. We know that they are already far down the road to realizing many of their dreams... we believe that we can take them even farther.