



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Edgewater Public Schools

Mission Statement

The Edgewater School District, a culturally rich community, fosters academic achievement, social-emotional growth, and intellectual curiosity, preparing our students for lifelong learning and future success.

Session 1 of 3 - What are the Strengths/Achievements and Challenges/Opportunities of the Edgewater Public Schools?

On Tuesday, March 5, 2019 Edgewater Public School District administrators, staff, Board members, parents, students and community members came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening's topic focused on the Strengths/Achievements, and Challenges/Opportunities of the Edgewater Public Schools. The meeting began with welcoming remarks by Thomas Quinton, President of the Board of Education. Kerry Postma, Superintendent, provided an informative overview of the district's current state. Facilitators Matt Lee and Charlene Peterson from the New Jersey School Boards Association introduced the strategic planning methodology and assisted throughout the process.

More than 50 community, parent and staff participants gathered in seven randomly assigned groups to identify the Strengths/Achievements and Challenges/Opportunities of the Edgewater Public Schools through brainstorming and the sharing of ideas. After discussion, each group came to a consensus on its top 10 Strengths/Achievements and top 10 Challenges/Opportunities and presented those to the full group of meeting participants.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. All consensus points are recorded and posted on the district's website (www.edgewaterschools.org) to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

Group Consensus: Strengths/Achievements & Challenges/Opportunities

Red Dot Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Diverse	Population growth
Technology	Diverse
Safety (by appointments)	Mobility rate
Parental involvement	Math scores (PARCC)
Communication school to parents	Class size
Facilities	
Staff	

Green Dot Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Smooth transition from George Washington to Eleanor Van Gelder	Not enough building space for student population
Qualified staff with many advanced degrees	Large class sizes
1:1 technology in grades 3-6	Mobility rate
Consistent curriculum in all grades	Attendance for students, subs for teachers
Bilingual program and ELL program	School rating, salary ranking

Black Dot Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Diversity	Growing population
After school clubs (varied)	Cultural differences - getting parents comfortable and involved
1:1 Chromebooks	Transient district
Trips across all grade levels - close to New York City	Would like more community involvement: public relations between existing Community entities (library and Recreation Center)
Leonia Middle School/High School students of Edgewater - students are proud of their community	Parent involvement: keep us informed about curriculum; new parents from other countries need more information
Articulation between Eleanor Van Gelder and Leonia Middle School	Translating information to parents

Edgewater Public Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

Blue Dot Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Strong academics	Increase in population
Supporting teachers in professional development	Busing
Class size	Parent drop-off
Teacher quality and professionalism	Tax increases
Technology	New location
Diversity	Cost
Transportation	Cost to Leonia
Variety of classes and opportunities for students	Impact to Leonia
Community support	Planning board and Mayor and Council should be involved
Strong Board of Education	School funding formula
Safety preparation	District consolidation
Busing	

Orange Dot Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Diversity	Space for students
Strong leadership	Lack of information for parents about why there is no middle school or High School
Flexible to meet the needs of the community	Parent programs to interact with Leonia school system
Maintenance of facilities	Transportation
Class size - teachers	Special education
Teachers College - Columbia University partnership	Enrichment gifted and talented pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade
Good collaboration between 5th and 6th grade EW/Leonia	Technology after EW
Math coaching	Parent involvement
Security	Security
STEAM	STEAM
Inter-visitation	
Dynamic town	

E (Edgewater) Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Academic focus	Social time limited
Nice facilities	Short lunch times
Teacher communication	Bullying topics not addressed as whole group
Special education program	Disconnect between teachers, recess staff, bus or aftercare
PTO	More art classes
	High-level gifted program is lacking - students board
	School garden
	Bus aides more responsible
	Class size
	Social situations discussed as teachable moments

Edgewater Public Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

No Dot Group:

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
State Testing	Voting eligibility
Teachers	Transient community
Student achievement	Athletics - Eleanor Van Gelder starting late - lose positions on teams
Community involvement/outreach	Busing - limit to further students
Student/teacher ratio	Technology at George Washington - Chromebooks
Diversity - multicultural	Rapid development outstrips demand
Influx of families - emphasis on education	Building Middle School
Relatively small community	More aids/teachers in school, especially with special education teachers getting pulled out
By building George Washington School we can get things done	Handicap accessible
1:1 Chromebooks	Scheduling needs tweaking
Money - well off community	Developer of buildings - give back to school more classrooms
Connections with Leonia	
Safe Community	

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for: Tuesday March 19, 2019 from 6:30 – 8:00 pm at the Eleanor Van Gelder School.

During the March 19 meeting, using a similar brainstorming process, we will identify our visions for the Edgewater Public Schools five years from now.

The final meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27 at 6:30 pm to write goal statements using the input from the two previous sessions.

Please join us. Everyone is welcome, and can fully participate, even if you were not able to attend the first meeting. We look forward to seeing you!