



## **Creating a Strategic Plan for the Allendale Public Schools**

### **Mission Statement**

The Allendale K-8 School District seeks to promote an environment where all students can learn and achieve in schools that focus on high standards for academics, talents and behavior.

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

On Thursday, January 11, 2018, Allendale Public School District administrators, staff, Board members, parents, and community members came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening's topic focused on the Strengths/Achievements, and Challenges/Opportunities of the Allendale Public Schools. After officially opening the public meeting of the BOE, the program began with welcoming remarks by Todd Fliegel, President of the Board of Education. Dr. Michael Barcadepone, Superintendent, provided an informative overview of the district. 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 30 community, parent and staff participants gathered in four randomly assigned groups to identify the Strengths/Achievements and Challenges/Opportunities of the Allendale 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 (<https://www.allendalek8.com>) to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

**Allendale Public Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes**

**Group Consensus: Strengths/Achievements & Challenges/Opportunities**

**Red Dot Group:**

<b>Strengths/Achievements</b>	<b>Challenges/Opportunities</b>
Improvements in: language arts, technology overall, 1:1 initiative, Library - Learning Commons, Innovation Lab	Renovations/Building Maintenance
Community Support - AFEE	Optimizing learning spaces
Staff - professional development	Population increases
Class size	Financial challenges: taxes, budget
Student wellness – mental/ physical; Resiliency Program Health & Fitness	Continued implementation of new technology
Board of Education support	Student transitions into new technology
County recognition: Ecology Center, Guitars, Cross Country	More opportunities with Quad District (shared services agreements)
Superintendent leadership and commitment	

**Orange Dot Group:**

<b>Strengths/Achievements</b>	<b>Challenges/Opportunities</b>
Capital reserve to qualify for financial benefits	Lack of space - real estate - small land/fields/parking areas
Focus on Arts	Size of district
TOK PK curriculum	Classroom storage
Taxes have not increased while programs have remain strong	Need for great 8 wellness to transition to high school
Technology achievements: access/innovation/IT team	Increase in school anxiety
Teachers/parents supportive/collaborative/community organizations	Increase lunch (mealtime)
social emotional learning balanced with digital learning	Menu selection - need for healthier options
Size of district - it's easy to implement change, both changing mindset and implementing change	Full access to grading portal
Nimble and flexible	5 full days of kindergarten
Smaller class sizes	Snow day notification - earlier notice
Smooth transition from elementary to middle School	Increasing enrollment - lack of clear Trends
Focus on public speaking skills for students	Technology at recess - need for more socialization and/or physical activity
Variety of extracurricular activities	Teachers at professional development often out of classrooms - subs
Alignment of curriculum K-8	Very rigorous curriculum for students versus developmental ages at younger grades
Addition of curriculum coordinator and professional development	Need for vertical articulation amongst grades

**Allendale Public Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes**

**Black Dot Group:**

<b>Strengths/Achievements</b>	<b>Challenges/Opportunities</b>
Small group instruction	Foreign language time and into kindergarten
Services to students	Spelling
Culture of kindness	How to cover additional students (teachers and space)
Facilities	Possible full day kindergarten
Sense of community – involvement of staff and parents	Wellness
Health/wellness of child	More art

**Green Dot Group:**

<b>Strengths/Achievements</b>	<b>Challenges/Opportunities</b>
Learning Commons	More ways for students to express ideas: school, people, subjects
Whiteboard to answer question prompted	More and better public relations to share successes: video, website, yearly state of the school
Attempting to get information out (i.e. delayed opening info three ways)	School puts successes out, but people don't see it
Strong community involvement and support	This output is often “cute” stuff - present substance
Resiliency initiative	Parents don't always get / read info; possibly unclear lines of dispersing info
Makerspace areas in Learning Commons	Finding places for kids who don't fit in the usual boxes
Test scores	Hillside classrooms need renovation. Brookside?
Curriculum (cohesive)	Mental health
Teachers are tech savvy and communicative with parents	Create more spaces for kids to learn/explore (i.e. Learning Commons)
Focus on STEM (4th grade kinetics unit) in routine	Keep test scores high without overwhelming students
Technology works at school, works at home also	Expectations on kids have risen
Group work and presentations: doing more of it - real world connection	For research, some websites are blocked - access to information
Teachers respond to emails after hours	Technology is changing; what will we need 5 years from now? Budgeting? Curriculum?
Willing to take risks - does not rest on status quo	Are we over-using technology? Lots of screen time is it too much?
Music and art	Homework - is it appropriate? Conflict of homework and extracurricular activities
	More opportunities for global experiences
	More opportunities to get out of Allendale
	Kids don't always know connect with different drives
	Incorporating other ways to learn present (i.e. music, art)
	Dropping participation in food drives - are there too many?

***Allendale Public Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes***

**The second strategic planning session is scheduled for: Thursday, February 15 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at the Brookside Learning Commons.**

During the February 15 meeting, using a similar brainstorming process, we will identify our visions for the Allendale Public Schools five years from now.

The final meeting will be held on Monday, March 19 at 7:00 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!