

Goals 2008-2009:

Strengths and Weaknesses

Create a culture that fosters individual academic achievement for all students.

Strengths—What success have we experienced?

- Academic Support Instruction
- Recognition of kids
- Individualized instruction
- Summer school program
- Tutoring opportunities
- Program consistency
- Assessment—we know what students are learning.
 - Subgroups
 - Where to target instruction
- Staff development—controlled, tied to district goals
- Extended day program for some groups
- Improved assessment tools for decision support
- Channeling resources to at-risk students

Weaknesses—What obstacles have we faced?

- Cost of Academic Support Instruction
- Gifted and talented program
- Low interest in AP courses
- Response to Intervention (RTI)—need to institutionalize this
- Under-developed assessment capability of NWEA and other standardized tests
- Programs for higher level kids—academic, extracurricular
- Extracurricular activities—quantity, variety, quality
- Increase general education options
- Reduce staff resistance to differentiation

Create focused opportunities for administrators, teachers, and staff to ensure student success.

Strengths

- Most is grant-funded
- Use PD as a money maker
- Coordination/alignment of PD with instructional requirements
- Coordination and consistency of PD
- PowerSchool
- Teacher/Parent coordination
- More intrusive observation of teaching
- Increase of common planning time for staff
- Transition activities from program to program and school to school
- New evaluation procedures for non-tenured
- Worked with other administrators to look at what is best for the district, not just for a particular department/school

Weaknesses

- Grant-funding is a long-term threat
- Less individual choice in PD options
- Make more money with PD and shared services
- Pulls our resources...central office staff
- Inflexible union
- Need of diversity for staff

Engage the community of Lawrence Township within the schools.

Strengths

- Coordination with all things in Township—Council, recreation, health
- Transition programs
- Student employment
- Community-based instruction
- Budget meetings
- Targeted engagement of Latino parents
- Community Conversation
- Community survey
- *The Link*, *QuickNews*, good press
- Community input on decisions...Community Conversation, Task Force
- No one seems to care
- Programs and literature focused on community outreach

Weaknesses

- Segments of community still not engaged
- Getting community at budget meetings and vote
- More communication with parents who don't have kids in district
- More town-hall style meetings for input
- Communication of teachers with parents
- Haven't surveyed private school/homeschool parents

Explore and develop long-range planning strategies, cost containment, and new revenue sources and enhance technology interoperability.

Strengths

- Shared special education services with surrounding districts
- Solar
- Tuition-in special education students
- ETTC
- After-school programs
- Fiber project
- Write more grants
- Enterprise funds
- Tom, Michael Dean, Bill
- IT Department has identified an established standard that is potentially useful for enhancing semantic interoperability: Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF).
- Bring back special education students
- Shared services consortium
- Academy
- We are ahead of most districts.

Weaknesses

- Conserve energy
- No way to predict special education enrollments
- Not much to copy from others
- Semantic interoperability as a consideration may not infuse all decision-making processes
- Cut in state aid
- Building structure

Leon highlighted/interpreted feedback from the Parent Opinion Survey.

It's important to remember that grants should be used for non-recurring expenses.

What are some of the obstacles we've faced with each goal?

- Goals 2008-09 Progress
- Community Survey

Goals 2008-2009 → 2009-2010

Opportunities and Threats

Create a culture that fosters individual academic achievement for all students.

Opportunities—Where do we go from here?

- Smaller class size
- Higher accountability...set internal standards higher than state
- Content relative to real world
- Allow for teachable moments
- Focus on educating students on basics/fundamentals
- Critical thinking

- Balance a creative educational approach (passion vs. testing)
- Is a year enough time? (flexible school year)

Threats—What roadblocks must we address before we begin/continue our journey?

- House system hinders socialization
- Mandated state curriculum
- How do we instill in all students the will to succeed?

Create focused opportunities for administrators, teachers, and staff to ensure student success.

Opportunities

- Teacher training to provide “challenging” learning issue
- Use of public facilities
- PD
- Who will be responsible and how will they know?
- Way to help students (teacher) when they don’t understand a lesson—what assistance is available to students? After-school? Tutor?
- KLT
- More help for college/career guidance
- More support
- PD for extracurricular activities

Threats

- Educate/re-educate new/old professional staff

Engage the community of Lawrence Township within the schools.

Opportunities

- Willingness to fail
- Develop a culture where it’s “cool” to succeed
- Parents kept in the loop

Threats

- How do we bridge home and school?
- How do we get community involvement?

Explore and develop long-range planning strategies, cost containment, and new revenue sources and enhance technology interoperability.

Opportunities

(None identified)

Threats

- Cost of implementing special programs
- What are we willing to give up? Pay for?
- Community support what needs to be done by providing money
- State of New Jersey

Laura outlined some of the challenges identified on the BOE's self-evaluation.

Finance

- Continuing to move the district forward within the continually more repressive fiscal and regulatory edicts from the State of NJ.
- Money for next year.
- We need to provide our great Lawrence education at a lower cost because of declining state aid, new regulations, and economic climate. What are we willing to give up? How can we bring in other sources of funding? We need to get creative and flexible.
- How can we deal with the State's unreliability paying debt aid, scheduled school aid payments, assumed extraordinary aid, etc.?

Student Achievement

- Implementing higher standards
- Poor academic performance by "at risk" students
- Lack of leadership in providing academic challenges to good students through stimulating courses and extracurricular activities
- The effect of two challenges above at driving top students from the district, creating a downward spiral of continuously declining quality. I am not convinced that gimmicks like "differentiated instruction," "small learning communities," and "career academies" are the right answer.
- We need a longer school year. We should have school start earlier, end later in the year – even if it means some additional vacation days in between. This will reduce the summer memory gap.
- We need to move away from the assumption that every kid should go to a four-year liberal arts college. Some of our students would achieve great success through vo-tech programs, and we should encourage this alternative pathway.

Professional Development

- I think there is still a problem with not all of the teachers buying in to Differentiated Instruction (DI). I know there is only so much time in the day, but I think the administration and supervisors really need to focus on teachers 4th grade and above where it is less apparent that DI is taking place. We also need to encourage kids to come forward and say that they are bored if they are bored in class so we can get them more appropriate work.

Community Involvement

- LTPS has done a great job bringing the community into the strategic planning process. How do we continue to engage them in a meaningful way?

Boardsmanship

- Keeping all of us focused on the big picture of managing the district, not running it.
- To avail ourselves of ongoing boardsmanship training.
- Put the policies away for a while – that was brutal going through all of them.

Other

- Changing composition of student body

2009-2010 Goals *Draft*

- Create a culture that fosters academic achievement and growth for all students (An objective could be to examine the world language program. Laura asked CIAPD to look at this.)
- Explore and develop long-range planning strategies, cost containment, and new revenue sources.
- Create focused opportunities for administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and community, and to ensure student success. (legislative involvement state, county, municipality) (Note to COA: buy-in from staff)
- Enhance Technology Interoperability. (Fred)
- Engage the Lawrence Township community within the schools.