



Creating a Strategic Plan For the Island Heights School District

Mission Statement

The mission of the Island Heights Grade School is to provide a safe and nurturing community where diversity is celebrated, mutual respect among adults and children is practiced, and where parents and caregivers are seen as valued partners in layering the foundation of life-long learning.

Island Heights Grade School creates an environment supportive of courageous endeavors and committed to helping all children achieve academic excellence through intellectual, creative, and physical challenges, enabling them to function as productive and successful citizens in a changing society.

Session 1

Identifying Strengths & Challenges of the Island Heights School District

On October 17, 2024, Island Heights Grade School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, and community members, eighteen in all (18) in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Mr. Timothy Rehm, Superintendent. Mr. Timothy Rehm and Ms. Lisa Royer, Principal, presented the current “State of the School” report. Dr. Laurie Bandlow and Mary Ann Friedman from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) were introduced and explained the strategic planning process.

We reviewed the consensus process utilized in strategic planning. The topic for the evening focused on identifying district strengths and challenges. Participants gathered in randomly assigned groups, four groups in all, and engaged in brainstorming the districts strengths and challenges. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points, “Top 10” strengths and challenges. Each group reported their outcomes to the larger group. The large group then identified “Common Themes” that had occurred throughout the small group outcomes.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district website to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

Small Group Consensus: Strengths, Achievements& Challenges

Group #1:

Strengths	Challenges
Small school – offers a great deal	Lack of space/enrollment growth
Students very connected to the community	Budget/Funding
Excellent staff	Maintaining technology needs and trends
Supportive BOE, IHEF, PTO	Common teacher planning time
Ideal class size	Lack of environmental school/community connections
Grant opportunities	Out of district tuition* <i>added by superintendent</i>
	Transportation costs* <i>added by superintendent</i>

Group #2:

Strengths	Challenges
Small classes	Space
Special education	Substitutes (lack of)
Great staff/teachers	Parent commitment
Teacher retention	Health costs (healthcare)
Supportive administration	State aid
Level of education	Community involvement
#1 in Ocean County	Regionalization
Preschool Program	
IH Education Foundation	

Group #3:

Strengths	Challenges
Educators/staff	Physical space
IH community	Parking
Proximity to cultural institutions (PETO, OCAG, Historical Society)	Willing volunteers
Class size	Variety and quantity of programs coming to school
Building & grounds	Day trips
Focus on respect	Diversity/exposure
Blue Ribbon education	DARE, etc.
Safety	
Tech	
Group kids by age	

Group #4:

Strengths	Challenges
Each student has Educational Plan for success	Maintaining excellence
Small class sizes	Expanding student population *facilities
Dedicated staff	Funding (the unknown)
High achieving students *Continuity*	Expanding State tasks *small staff/lots of hats
Parental involvement	Building maintenance
Community valuing education	Keeping part-time staff (specials, etc.)
Educationally cohesive environment *The Town	
Outside financial support *PTO & *IHEF	
Cooperation amongst stakeholder groups	
Non-Partisan Board of Ed *Emphasis on the Children*	

Following each group reporting out on their consensus points, the large group identified the following **common themes**:

Common Themes - Strengths	Common Themes - Challenges
Class sizes	Space
Great, dedicated staff	Funding
Student respect for the community	Maintaining the school building
BOE, PTO, IHEF support	Keeping up with the technology needs & trends
Student achievement	Staff wearing too many hats with expanding mandates
Safety	

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 6:00 pm

Sign-in begins at 5:45 pm

Island Heights Grade School

Meetings #2 and #3 are scheduled for 1.5 hours. Meetings start and end promptly.

During the November 19th meeting, participants will create a shared vision together for the future of the Island Heights School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and school district.

Please join us. Bring a friend! Everyone is welcome! We look forward to seeing you!

Please RSVP by calling the Superintendent's Office or using the Google RSVP form on the district website.

Island Heights School District Attendee List – Strategic Planning Meeting

#1

October 17, 2024

1. Mr. Tim Rehn
2. Lillian Brendel
3. Lisa Royer
4. Beth Smutz
5. Kelly Torres
6. Dave Block
7. Maureen DeSanto
8. Brooke Nelson
9. Ashley Edwards
10. Quinn Arevalo
11. Cody Wilber
12. Bob MacNeal
13. Barbara Parisi
14. Frank Parisi
15. Linda Garvey
16. Eric Bornebusch
17. A. Robert King