

# New Jersey School Boards Association

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# Creating a Strategic Plan for the Park Ridge Public Schools

#### **Mission Statement**

The Park Ridge School District is committed to the mission of educating all students to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at all grade levels. The district will nurture all students to be lifelong learners, ethical and responsible citizens, and independent, productive members of a global society.

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

On Thursday, January 19, 2017 Park Ridge 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 Park Ridge Public Schools. The meeting began with welcoming remarks by Joseph Bruno, President of the Board of Education. Dr. Robert Gamper, Superintendent, provided an informative overview of the district. Facilitators Matt Lee and Terri Lewis from New Jersey School Boards Association introduced the strategic planning methodology and assisted throughout the process.

Just over 40 community, parent and staff participants gathered in four randomly assigned groups to identify the Strengths/Achievements and Challenges/Opportunities of the Park Ridge 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 (http://www.parkridge.k12.nj.us/) 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
Technology	Reintroduce shop class/cooking/home economics
Attracting unbelievable administrative team	More emphasis on world languages and adding to
	them (Mandarin)
College track	Maintain current class size
School security	Updating buildings/facilities
Highly qualified teaching staff (credentialed)	HVAC
Special services	Relocate bus parking from West Ridge lot
Guidance/planning department	Lobby monitor location /drop-off afternoon
	security
	Future additions/expansions

**Green Dot Group:** 

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Technology (1 to 1; PowerSchool)	Space
Small class size	Maintaining small class size
Teaching staff (commitment and accessibility/continuity (7-12))	Diversity (Clubs / Student Life)
Parent involvement	Cohesiveness of two elementary schools
Facility improvements (Green initiatives)	Uncertainty of future for town (population)
Strong fundamentals in reading & math	Investment in the arts/specials
	Too much test prep
	Investment in Maker Space - STEAM

### **Purple Dot Group:**

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Security → relationships	Infrastructure (buildings, structure, AC, filters,
	Univent)
Technology (1:1 laptops)	Maintaining security
Staff →education	Updating technology
Parent/teacher communication	Attrition plan for influx of new staff; older staff
	leaving
PowerSchool/Schoology	Teaching space (lack of)
Curriculum	Parking (emergency access, speed, drop off)
Internships	Electives based on student interest (7-12)
Staff participation (in extracurriculars)	Life skills course?
Administrator/teacher relationships/mentoring	Interaction/relationship with community
Operation Graduation/PTO (Elementary)	Student retention

#### Park Ridge Public Schools Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes

#### **Blue Dot Group:**

Strengths/Achievements	Challenges/Opportunities
Class size	Technology - wary of over-reliance; need to learn
	digital citizenship
Graduation rate + 4-year college %	Lack of social skills
Warm relationship between PTO community and	Home economics (lack of)
teachers/administration	
Technology - Access	Need better outreach for new parents
Class offerings, i.e. foreign language in elementary	Lack of alignment between elementary schools, i.e.,
schools	communication, calendar
	Support Staffing - lunch and recess, training
	Lack of space across the board
	Shared services with other districts

#### The second strategic planning session is scheduled for: Thursday, February 16, 2017 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at the Park Ridge High School Little Theater.

During the February 16 meeting, using a similar brainstorming process, we will identify our visions for the Park Ridge Public Schools five years from now. Snow Date: February 23.

The final meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16 at 7:00 pm to write goal statements using the input from the two previous sessions.

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