

West Hempstead School District

Strategic Planning Council

Meeting Summary

April 2, 2008

In attendance: L. Abruzzo, R. Bernato, J. Bonasia, T. Brita, T. Cali, J. Caufield, A. Cavaliere, J. Cirnigliaro,, C. DePaola, O. Eckert, J. Eisen, L. Gagliano, T. Ganley, D. Gould, B. Hafner, W. Heckler, A. Hoffman, J. Hogan, J. Hume, M. Jones, M. Keating, T. Lee, E. Loewy, P. Lotito, J. Mariano, R. Norton, A. O'Keefe, A Peluso, M. Schultz, M. Schumacher, S. Schwartz, C. Senia, L. Stone, J. Trapani, C. VanKovics, M. Vitale, R. Yanni

The following materials were distributed to council members upon arrival:

- Agenda for 4/2/08
- Meeting Summary of 3/12/08
- Updated Council Member Contact List (as of 3/17/08)
- Mission Statement Subcommittee Update (3/17/08)
- Nassau County School Library meeting summary (3/12/08) submitted by Barbara Stern, high school librarian giving an overview of a presentation regarding the integration of information and literacy standards into the content areas. The presenter was Doug Johnson, Director of Technology for the Mankato Public Schools in Minnesota. This summary was shared since it was aligned with the technology embedded instructional model discussed during the previous SPC meeting.
- Letters to the editor from Newsday (3/20/08) entitled "School Diversity is an Advantage" submitted by Mimi Schultz, since it expressed some of the views presented during discussions at SPC meetings.
- Mission Statement draft submitted by the mission statement subgroup. This document included a logo, bullets highlighting core values, and a mission statement.

Superintendent John Hogan opened the meeting and welcomed council members. He reflected on the work done to date and discussed future goals. Quoting John F. Kennedy, Mr. Hogan stated, "I am an idealist without illusions." He encouraged the council to develop realistic goals in each subgroup keeping in mind fiscal restrictions that exist. The group was encouraged to establish practical goals that can be achieved in a 3-5 year timeframe. Mr. Hogan also emphasized that the council serves as an advisory group to the Board of Education and that all final decisions are made by the members of the Board.

Dr. Bernato greeted the council members and recognized the powerful momentum developed during the previous meeting. He discussed the goals of the evening including the formation of subgroups and an examination and discussion of the draft mission statement. Small groups would begin to develop goals and identify strategies used to make the goals happen. He reviewed the action plan template which includes: goals, strategies, who is responsible, timetable, resources and criteria for success. At the next meeting subgroups will begin working on action plans once goals have been established. He reviewed how the groups would be working backward once the goals were established for the 5/28/08 meeting.

Dr. Bernato apologized for the incorrect SONY mission statement shared at the previous meeting. The minutes from 3/12/08 were reviewed and accepted by the council.

Ann Peluso distributed small group preference forms. Each council member made three choices, in priority order, for subgroup participation. Ann and Mr. Hogan then created four subgroups based on the preferences of the members. It was decided to combine the curriculum and data assessment subgroups since very few people expressed an interest in data assessment. An effort was made to balance the groups so that the groups would contain members representing each constituency. Most members were placed in the first choice group. A few members were placed in the second choice group. Group members are listed below:

- **Curriculum and Data Assessment (including Special Education):** Lynette Abruzzo, Joe Bonasia, Anthony Cali, Janice Caufield, Joe Cirnigliaro, Terry Ganley, Dina Gould, Barbara Hafner, Maritza Jones, Ellen Loewy, Pam Lotito, Mimi Schultz, Chris VanKovics, Richard Yanni.
- **Educational Technology:** Tony Brita, Ailene Cavaliere, Thomas Lee, Chris Senia, Linda Stone.
- **Professional Development:** Christina DePaola, Jeff Eisen, Wayne Heckler, Jim Hume, Mary Keating, Jim Mariano, Annette O'Keefe, Maribeth Schumacher.
- **Community Involvement (including student involvement):** Olga Eckert, Lorraine Gagliano, Aileen Hoffman, Rosalie Norton, Stacey Schwartz, Jon Trapani, Mary Jane Vitale.

Terry Ganley presented the draft mission statement material to the council. Dr. Bernato facilitated a discussion regarding the draft document (attached). A lively discussion took place and a number of suggestions for changes were made. It was suggested that the following items be added to the bullets:

- respect
- life-long quest for learning
- self respect
- positive self esteem
- character

It was suggested that "an inclusive community" be deleted from the mission statement, that the wording be changed to "The West Hempstead School Community" rather than West Hempstead. It was also suggested that students prepare for their future and prepare for meaningful post-high school pursuits also be added to the mission.

Since the council had previously agreed to keep the mission statement development as a parallel project to the subgroup work, the mission statement discussion was brought to closure for this meeting with the understanding that it would be revisited regularly as the council continues its work.

Subgroup composition was shared. Dr. Bernato reminded the members that subgroups should start with a SWOT analysis, discuss root causes, establish goals, choose a chairperson, choose a scribe, and figure out a way to communicate among the subgroup participants in between meetings.

Council members transitioned into small groups and worked for approximately one hour to complete a SWOT analysis, identify root causes and establish goals. At the close of the small group sessions, one person from each group gave a brief summary of the group's work:

Professional Development—Jim Hume shared highlights of the discussion including:

- a move towards addressing classroom needs and individualizing staff development during the current year,
- the feeling of the group that it would be beneficial to have teachers presenting professional development and sharing their areas of expertise with colleagues,
- the need for professional development for all staff within the school community.

Community Involvement--Rosalie Norton shared highlights of the SWOT discussion including:

- Weaknesses—increase in economically disadvantaged families, negative impression of the West Hempstead Community/High School on the part of some people, lack of pride for community among residents, minimal involvement, very little public relations, language barrier, fear of immigrants,
- Strengths—size of schools, diverse community, elementary schools, many residents are second, third and fourth generation residents and should be asked what made them return to the community, our new superintendent, the number of outside groups that could be tapped to support the schools, new administration.

Curriculum/Data Assessment/Special Education—Joe Bonasia shared the feeling of the group that tackling this topic will be a daunting challenge. The group worked on a SWOT analysis and identified:

- Strengths—schools are on line with meeting state standards for the majority of students.
- Weaknesses—insufficient means of assessing students, little interaction among disciplines, no systematic curriculum review cycle in place.
- Opportunities—we should not be happy to simply meet standards, but should be working to exceed standards, make the disciplines compliment each other.
- Threats—lack of funding, lack of positions

Educational Technology—Ailene Cavaliere shared the group's discussion including:

- the need to review the district's technology plan,
- a desire to gather input from others (survey teachers and a sample of students and parents),
- an interest in speaking to other districts to find out how technology is being utilized,
- a commitment to explore what the current infrastructure of the district can support,
- a plan to put together a wish list of dreams five years in the future,
- identify the need for support and professional development,
- deal with fear and lack of time, access and support.

The group agreed that the emphasis should be on using technology as a tool for learning.

Dr. Bernato thanked the council members for their enthusiastic approach to the small group work and asked everyone to think about goals for our next meeting.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 9th from 7:00 – 9:00 PM in the middle school cafeteria. Please remember to bring your nametag and binder.