

West Hempstead School District

Strategic Planning Council

Meeting Summary February 6, 2008

In attendance: L. Abruzzo, R. Bernato, J. Bonasia, A. Brita, T. Cali, M. Calick, J. Caulfield, A. Cavaliere, J. Cirnigliaro, B. Delphine, C. DePaola, J. DiMarco, J. Eisen, L. Gagliano, T. Ganley, D. Gould, B. Hafner, W. Heckler, A. Hoffman, J. Hogan, J. Hume, M. Keating, A. Keblish, J. Kurs, S. LaMendola, T. Lee, E. Loewy, P. Lotito, R. Macchio, J. Mariano, P. McVetty, E. Messina, C. Morales, A. Peluso, H. Schulman, M. Schultz, M. Schumacher, S. Schwartz, J. Sirlin, P. Uhl, C. VanKovics, M. Vitale, R. Yanni, M. Zunno

Superintendent John Hogan welcomed council members to the first meeting and thanked everyone for their willingness to serve on the council. He identified the main goal as creating a three to five year strategic plan identifying how we can better serve the boys and girls attending the West Hempstead School District. Five areas of focus were identified: curriculum, assessment, educational technology, professional development and community relations.

Mr. Hogan then introduced Dr. Richard Bernato who will serve as the outside facilitator of the council. Dr. Bernato is an associate professor at Dowling College and an independent consultant. His experience in education includes teacher, dean, principal, PPS director and assistant superintendent.

Dr. Bernato shared his passion for guiding groups of people to mutually empower themselves and promised that the council would develop something very special. He stated that the SPC (Strategic Planning Council) was empowered to formulate a long term, operational plan to be presented to the superintendent and Board of Education on an advisory basis.

Members of the council had an opportunity to introduce themselves and share one item about the history of the district. Trends that emerged from the group included: community, diversity, technology and changing demographics. Dr. Bernato introduced the co-facilitator of the council--Ann Peluso, Assistant Superintendent of the District and reviewed the advisory roles of council members.

Dr. Bernato recognized the value of having three members of the Board of Education serving as members of the council. He also recognized the value of integrating the multiple perspectives of council participants into the formulating of goals. He emphasized the importance of active listening, communication with all members of the community, and seeking feedback on the work of the council.

Ground rules were reviewed including: consensus, deadlocks, active listening, and the use of summaries provided. The calendar of meetings was reviewed. Vehicles for communication were reviewed including email, the district website, and meeting summaries.

The work of Patrick Lencioni regarding the dysfunctions of a team was presented to the council: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. Members were encouraged to self monitor in order to avoid these dysfunctions.

Ann Peluso reviewed the material distributed to the council members: meeting dates, contact information for all members, the District mission statement, the Board of Education goals for 2007-2008, assessment data from 2006-2007 and 2005-2006.

The decision tree strategy was presented to the group. This strategy emphasizes developing a plan of action by beginning with the end in mind. Two models of decision trees were developed with input from council members.

The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) model was also presented to the council by Dr. Bernato. The council then broke into six groups to begin work on a SWOT analysis of the district. At the close of the small group work, council members were thanked for attending the meeting and told that the results of the SWOT analyses would be shared at the next meeting (February 13, 2008). The meeting ended promptly at 9:00 PM.

Two websites were shared by Dr. Bernato:
Active Learning Consultants (Dr. Bernato's firm): activelearningconsult.com
Change Toolkit: reinventingeducation.org

SPC members are reminded to bring their binders and nametags to each meeting.