

Pelham Union Free School District
Strategic Plan 2019-2024



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Superintendent

Dr. Cheryl Champ

“Focus is the hidden driver of excellence.”

Daniel Goleman

Early in the 2018-19 academic year, Dr. Cheryl Champ, Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Education embarked on a process to set strategic goals for the years 2019-2024. With sharp intent, they chose a process of deep inclusivity and voice for all stakeholders within the school community as well as external stakeholders across the greater Pelham community. The process of data collection and analysis included:

- Community forums (agenda pages 13-14)
- Group forums with high school and middle school students
- Individual interviews with Board of Education members
- Individual interviews with district administrators and Association leaders
- Group forum for faculty
- Electronic surveys for all faculty; all parents of students; students in grades 4-12; support staff; and community members without children in the schools Total responses: 2,970
- Analysis of disaggregated state standardized test results; AP and SAT results

A highly engaged and representative core team of teachers, parents, Board members, administrators and students (pages 11-12) met for two days on March 13th and 14th to review all data, distill all input and work through a facilitated process to determine what goals would matter most, have the highest leverage and the greatest impact for the students of Pelham in the next five years. The work of Elizabeth City, *Strategy in Action*, was used to ground the core team in reaching consensus on strong and specific goals (core team agenda pages 15-16).

The data and input from educators, matched with the research base on the needs of contemporary, world class learners as well as the work recently accomplished and currently underway in the district led to the conclusion that the Pelham educational community’s focus on three main bodies of work would matter significantly in the learning and lives of Pelham students. Those three target areas are: Authentic Learning; Cultural Proficiency; and Whole Child. (page 5)



Pelham Public Schools

The Pelham School Community will develop empowered, adaptable, well-balanced individuals who are equipped to meaningfully contribute to our local, national and global society.

2019-2024 Strategic Goals:

Cultural Competence

Cultivate an empathetic, inclusive and equitable school community that values and encourages respect, voice and agency for all students.

Authentic Learning

Develop innovative problem solvers, critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and strong collaborators who can apply their knowledge and skills to navigate real world challenges.

Whole Child

Deepen our systemic academic and social-emotional supports for the health, safety, and well-being of the whole child, recognizing that our learners need to balance academic, physical, social, and emotional demands.

Action Plans

While work on goal development was deep, it was only the beginning. The next stage involved educators from across the district serving on action plan development teams led by co-chairs for each goal area (pages 17-19). The charge to them was to determine the first and most effective steps for the next 18 months of work toward each goal. The action steps designed for each goal are as follows:

Cultural Competence

Step 1:

Increase student voice/agency within the K-12 system

* Clubs and activities generated/created by and led by students/annual interest surveys for all pupils grades 4-12

- Fluidity of co-curricular topics: short and long term opportunities
- Form student focus groups to provide feedback/input regarding the curriculum and to shape future offerings and content
- Expand leadership and service opportunities K-12 both within the schools and across the greater community
- Measure students' opinions of our schools' cultures and climate annually
- Review Student Government practices (K-12)
- Incorporate purposeful invitation and inclusion for student voice in classrooms

Step 2:

Examine curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessments to ensure that they reflect principles, values and lessons of inclusivity and equity

- Research and adopt or develop criteria/guidelines for screening and recommendations of new resources
- Provide school/classroom libraries and online resources that reflect the diversity of our community, region, nation and world
- Professional learning for teachers to be able to welcome and integrate diverse thoughts, experiences and opinions in their classrooms

Step 3:**Increase partnerships with community stakeholders**

- Hold a Cultural Proficiency learning session for the community in October 2019
- Seek Pelham Education Foundation's financial support for continued efforts
- Invite PTA leaders and Board to participate in Cultural Proficiency training
- Incorporate site based teams & PTAs as resources for community goals, opportunities and lessons to greater parent community

Step 4:**Teachers/admin/ staff/ students routinely exercise an awareness and understanding of culturally responsive theory and practice**

- Adopt core terms and definitions for common use and shared understanding across the district
- Foster and deepen empathetic and inclusive school climates by understanding what empathy in schools is/looks like and how it is practiced
- Review current policies and procedures with focus on opportunity, access, support for all (sports sign up, discipline, code of conduct, dress code, DASA)
- Eliminate barriers to access so that all students and parents are able to fully participate in all school activities/processes/systems i.e. portal sports, access to Chromebooks, multiple forms of payment
- Hold Cultural Proficiency training for staff and community in October 2019
- Hold administrative training in Cultural Proficiency in August 2019

Step 5:**Align recruitment, hiring and on-boarding practices to build a more diverse and culturally proficient staff**

- Widen recruitment, advertising and networking to reach more diverse educators
- Include topics of cultural proficiency, appreciation of diversity (all facets), and experience with diverse populations in interview questions for all staff positions
- Screen for understanding and appreciation of cultural proficiency in hiring process
- Emphasize goal in new staff orientation
- Provide annual cultural proficiency training for new hires (online, readings, and/or in-person)

Authentic Learning

Step 1:

Explore new and advance previous efforts in providing relevant and authentic experiences for all learners

- Define and integrate common language regarding Authentic Learning in schools, and what it looks like (characteristics) in the classroom
- Integrate the Pelham Inquiry Cycle as a framework for advancing authentic learning experiences
- Explore partnership with the Performance-based Assessment Consortium and/or other associations to promote a more authentic learning culture
- Research success of the 12th grade senior internship program, and recommend the prospect for expanding to all students K-12
- Plan for the extension of the 10th grade IB Personal Project, and consider the implications on the 8th grade IB Community Project
- Examine the extent of authentic learning experiences through classroom observations
- Welcome stakeholders and alumni to participate in the exploration of new and better ways to expand authentic learning
- Establish professional learning experiences for administrators and teachers on authentic learning

Step 2:

Explore, study, and recommend ways to use time more effectively and efficiently in our schools and classrooms

- Develop a team of stakeholders to evaluate scheduling needs across the district, among all schools
- Collaborate with experts in the field of school scheduling to better understand best practices and ways to implement changes
- Collect stakeholder feedback on scheduling needs in the district
- Examine opportunities for vertical and horizontal teachers' collaboration and professional learning time
- Study ways to incorporate time for the development of students' social/emotional learning
- Provide recommendations and considerations for the district to implement
- Establish professional learning experiences for teachers and administrators in the effective and efficient use of time in our schools and classrooms

Step 3:

Explore, study, and recommend ways to use space more effectively and efficiently in our schools and classrooms

- Establish a team of stakeholders to guide the district's integration of student-centered learning experiences and flexible learning environments
- Collect stakeholder feedback on ways to enhance student-centered learning experiences
- Continue to seek regional partnerships in expanding knowledge about flexible learning environments
- Design and develop universal learning commons at each school, and integrate prototype flexible learning classrooms across the district
- Review district facilities to examine ways to optimize new and alternative areas for learning
- Establish professional learning experiences for administrators and teachers use of space more effectively and efficiently in our schools and classrooms

Whole Child

Step 1:

Research and determine priorities on District's beliefs about what constitutes a healthy environment

- Align Wellness Committee mission with the next strategic plan
- Research whole child models (ex. WSCC Model)
- Assess the current state of District's health and wellness

Step 2:

Form a district-wide Academic MTSS committee and develop a district-wide plan

- Form RTI Committee
- Inventory Current Program (Audit)
- Develop shared understanding and language of RTI
- Staff Training (Building RTI Committee, Admin, Building Principals)
- Create flowchart/documents for RTI Team (vertically and horizontally aligned)

Step 3:**Develop a district-wide Social Emotional MTSS committee to create a shared framework and identify approaches to social and emotional competencies K-12**

- Audit
- Identify program/ framework based on data for Tier 1
- Implement/adopt framework
- Identify program/ framework for Tiers 2&3 (ongoing work... to be continued)

Next Steps

The most critical work begins now, in the execution phase. It will only be with strident devotion to the execution and success of each goal that any of this work will matter for the students of Pelham. To that end, it will be frequent and detailed communication, monitoring, adjustment of course and semi-annual public reporting on progress in each goal area that will make the difference between well-crafted goals that are not enacted and goals that are successfully embedded in the work of educators and students across the district.

Strategic Plan Goals Team



NAME	ROLE
Beltecas, Steve	Science Teacher at Pelham Memorial High School
Bonaccorso, Joanna	Social Studies Teacher at Pelham Memorial High School/Pelham Middle School
Brown, Scott	Guidance Counselor at Pelham Middle School
Callahan, Tom	Director of Mathematics and Science K-12
Calvelli, Angela	District Coordinator of World Languages
Carpenter, Kate	Parent, Hutchinson Elementary School
Champ, Cheryl	Superintendent of Schools
Childs, Sue	BOE President & Parent, Pelham Memorial High School
Chung, Julia	Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services
Fallon, Devon	District Coordinator of Art
Gashi, Meryeme	District ENL Faculty
Haines, Bjorn	Parent, Colonial Elementary School
Jenkins, Morgan	Student, PMHS
Lau, Greg	Supervisor for Special Education 6-12 & CSE Chair
Liaskos, Peter	BOE Member & Parent, Pelham Memorial High School/Pelham Middle School
Marousek, Nicole	Special Education Teacher at Pelham Memorial High School
Martin, Julia	Grade 2 Teacher at Prospect Hill Elementary School
Martineau, Madison	Elementary Band Teacher
McCarthy, Kathleen	Kindergarten Teacher at Colonial Elementary School
Miller, Eileen	BOE Member & Parent, Pelham Memorial High School

Paradis, Joan	Parent, Siwanoy Elementary School
Pelin, Laura	Grade 4 Teacher at Siwanoy Elementary School
Potter, Gayle	Parent at Pelham Memorial High School
Rothstein, Judd	Assistant Principal at Pelham Memorial High School
Sabia, Lynn	Principal, Pelham Middle School
Sebalos, John	Director of Technology
Sharrock, Emily	Parent, Prospect Hill Elementary School
Tancredi-Brice Agbenyega, Emily	Parent, Siwanoy Elementary School
Thompson, Maria	Director of Humanities K-12
Vitale, Jessica	Math Teacher at Pelham Middle School
Wilson, Tonya	Principal, Colonial Elementary School
Woodward, Linda	Parent, Pelham Memorial High School/Pelham Middle School

Pelham Union Free Strategic Plan

Community Forum

January 31, 2019

“The future is not a far-off point: It arrives in daily doses that must be noticed and understood.”

HBR May 2016

“The problems you choose to solve define you. The secret to doing great things is staying focused on what matters most.”

Xerox

Please be specific and concise. We are not making decisions during this forum; we are seeking ideas to be considered in the goal-setting process.

Academics, Our Core Work:

- Is the curriculum preparing our students for living and learning as we head toward the middle of the 21st century?
- Is there rigor in the curriculum for *all* students?
- Are there plentiful opportunities for students to explore interests and apply their learning?

Support Networks:

- Most students need some type of support in order to be the best learner/thinker he/she can be. Mentors, coaches, counselors, nurses, advisors and classroom assistants all provide levels of support systems for learners and families. Are there facets of our support systems for students that need to be strengthened?

Co-curricular:

- Co-curricular opportunities shape our students learning and lives in significant ways. How are we doing with balance of opportunities? Types of opportunities? Opportunities that support 21st century skills and talents?

Social Emotional Learning and the Whole Child:

- Our young children and young adults have many expectations and pressures both placed upon them and self-imposed. Schools work to help students know themselves, develop strong character traits, and find meaning, direction and balance. Are our schools striking the right balance in this work?
- (Self-management; Self-awareness; Relationships; Responsible decision making; Social- awareness)

Technology:

- Once there is access (tools and connectivity) for teachers and students, excellent use of technology for advanced learning, deeper engagement, research, design and creation is the goal. How are our schools doing in the processes of technology integration and expansion of learning?

People as the Drivers of Excellence:

- Does the district recruit, hire and retain exceptionally well-qualified and passionate employees? Educators? Support Staff?

Equity/Diversity:

- The diversity of our district and community enriches our students' learning opportunities, their world views and their appreciation of each other. In what ways can we grow in our understanding of and service to our diverse learners?

Communication:

- While every organization or relationship can improve with better communication, being known for consistent, excellent communication is a strength for any school district. Where does communication lie in the spectrum of high priority district

Pelham Strategic Plan

Pillar Team Agenda

March 13th and 14th, 2019

Facilitated by Judith Wilson

“The future is not a far-off point: It arrives in daily doses that must be noticed and understood.”

HBR 2016

Wednesday, March 13th 9AM-2PM

“When we commit to bringing our deepest selves to the table, we are transformed by the act of creating something that we cannot create alone.” Peter Block

Who is here?

Why are we here? Our charge; our purpose: What they are and what they are not.

Pelham Union Free School District *today*

What do we value?

What do we hope?

What do we know?

What do we observe? Trends, patterns, directions, gaps?

“The problems you choose to solve (and the future you choose to create) define you. The secret to doing great things is staying focused on what matters most.” Xerox

“Every great advance...has issued forth from a new audacity of the imagination.” John Dewey

Thursday, March 14th 9AM-2PM

What makes a good goal? Elizabeth City’s work

Three queries suggested by the Dalai Lama:

If it just for me, or for others?

For the benefit of the few, or the many?

For now, or for the future?

How do we consider multiple needs and yet set priorities and create opportunity for focus?

Vision: With the end in mind

Back to the future protocol

Draft and wordsmith goals

Give definition to each goal

What are the next steps?

“Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.”

Jonathan Swift

Action Plan Committees

Cultural Competence

Co-Chairs: Lynn Sabia, Mereyeme Gashi

Gene Archer

Cristina Camacho

Sue Childs

Jeannine Clark

Mariana Cordero

Suzanne Diano

Gayle Potter

Anne Solimine

Emily Tancredi-Brice Agbenyega

Maria Thompson

Tonya Wilson

Authentic Learning

Co-Chairs: Steve Garcia, Alicia Gallagher

Steve Beltacas

Tom Callahan

Trisha Fitzgerald

Sean Llewellyn

Peter Liaskos

Joan Paradis

Laura Pelin

Sara Pinsker

Megan Rice

John Sebalos

Linda Woodward

Whole Child

Co-Chairs: Julia Chung, Dena Delfino, Kate Dembowski

Elizabeth Belanfante

Tom Callahan

Jeannine Carr

Beth Finkelstein

Greg Lau

Julie Liebersohn

Eileen Miller

Michele O'Neil

Judd Rothstein

Maria Thompson

Jessica Vitale

Katie Walker

Respectfully Submitted by Judith Wilson, Facilitator

June 2019