

Swedesboro-Woolwich School District: Strategic Plan

2022-2027



Table of Contents

- 3** Vision, Mission, Beliefs
- 4** A Message from the Superintendent
- 5** Facilitator Letter, PLC Associates
- 6** Task Force: Community and Families
- 9** Task Force: Structures, Operations, Systems
- 12** Task Force: Student Experience
- 16** Task Force: Teaching and Learning
- 20** Core Team and Task Force Members



Our Vision

We seek to become a premier pre-kindergarten to grade six district, by embracing, equipping, and empowering each student to maximize their extraordinary potential. We will cultivate a love of learning and a positive sense of self and others in a rich and immersive academic environment, where students feel safe and inspired to take educational risks.

Our Mission

As a collaborative and nurturing community, the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District provides a high-quality education for each student which is supported by innovative instructional practices and the promotion of excellence, positivity, inclusion, and growth.

This mission will be achieved by providing comprehensive curricula, grounded in the New Jersey (NJ) Student Learning Standards, driven by dedicated faculty, staff, families, and community partners.

Our Beliefs

- Collaboration: through collaboration, all voices can be heard, and each individual is included in the community of learners.
- Justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI): our school community is focused on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion for all students, staff, and community members.
- Positivity: providing an environment for our students, faculty and staff that is grounded in positivity.
- Innovation/potential: we believe that all students are uniquely and wonderfully made with a purpose and have unlimited potential.
- Pride in the district: our district believes in commitment to quality education and is proud of the reputation created by our dedicated, dependable staff.
- Transparency/communication: transparent communication and collaboration is of the utmost importance with all stakeholders to achieve the highest success with all students and create innovation for our district.
- Community: the stakeholders of the Swedesboro Woolwich School District community, including taxpayers, staff and all students, work together to provide a caring learning environment built on respect.

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Swedesboro Woolwich School District Family,

Leading our *Comets* into the future has created a sense of excitement for the Swedesboro Woolwich School District's Board of Education (BOE) and the district's leadership. To effectively lead our students into the future, the BOE and administration decided to create a long-term strategic plan that will drive the district's work for years to come. This plan will guide us as we collaboratively work with a shared vision.

During the 2022-2023 school year, with the support of educational consultants PLC Associates, the district implemented a strategic planning process, which included the creation of a core team and four task forces addressing issues of importance as identified by our community as well as a report that outlines specific short- and long-term goals. We are tremendously grateful for the hard work of our strategic planning team members that included board of education members, faculty and staff, and parents and caregivers.

The purpose of this plan is to help our district enhance the educational opportunities we offer by coherently aligning our purpose. After receiving constructive feedback from our school community, we were able to collaboratively identify our "why" or, in other words, our purpose. We are a community committed to inspiring lifelong learning.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter J. Kappeler, Jr.".

Dr. Walter J. Kappeler, Jr.
Superintendent



Message from Facilitators, PLC Associates

Dear Community of Swedesboro-Woolwich,

It has been our pleasure to serve as facilitators and partners with the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District in completing the district's Strategic Plan for 2022-2027. The plan development began in April 2022, and together with the commitment of many district and community partners, a five-year plan focused on student success was created.

Through a great commitment of time and thoughtful discussion, the BOE and core team members created mission, vision and beliefs statements to guide the district over the next five years. The mission, vision and beliefs statements are student-centered, inclusive, and set high expectations for teaching and learning.

The task forces also committed a great amount of time, conducted research, and engaged in exploration and discussion, to bring the strategic intents, or five-year goals, to life through action plans. The strategic intents focus on districtwide systems and operations, teaching and learning, the student experience, and family and community. Comprehensive action plans were created to support excellent student outcomes as the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District sets its vision on being a premier kindergarten to grade six district, providing a high-quality education for each student. To achieve this vision, the district embraces the power of collaboration and emphasizes the value of all school community members in supporting students and the district.

The Swedesboro-Woolwich Strategic Plan is designed to be implemented systematically over the next five years. Embedded throughout the plan are opportunities to check on implementation, monitor progress and impact to student learning. It is an excellent blueprint to guide the district in the future. We are honored to have been part of this important work and express our gratitude to all members of the school community for their enthusiasm and commitment throughout the development of the Swedesboro-Woolwich Strategic Plan.

With gratitude and best wishes for success,
Judi Riley, Facilitator
Jared Kahmar, Facilitator
PLC Associates, LLC

Task Force: Community and Families



Community and Families: Strategic Intents, Strategies and Action Plans

Charge:	Increase parent/guardian/caregiver involvement in activities and increase ease and accessibility of district/building level communication of daily events, dates, etc.
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Strategic Intent #1 and Action Plans:

Starting in 2022-2023, we will implement steps to improve our platforms for sharing information.

- 1.1 Implement strategies to improve our district website, making it more user-friendly.
- 1.1a Hold a focus group of community/families to explore what defines a user-friendly website and identify priority information that the community/families would like available on the website.
- 1.1b Create a calendar page on the website for each building that will list all events for the month.
- 1.2 Maintain a comprehensive calendar page/link for all district-wide events continually updating and communicating district events and activities for all stakeholders.
- 1.3 Implement calendar links or buttons in a highly visible location that is easily accessible on the district main page.
- 1.4 Share the calendar in multiple ways, including a printed copy that will be sent home to all families at the beginning of each month. Provide information on accessing the electronic version.
- 1.4a Include a link to the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District calendar.
- 1.5 Update calendars regularly to include information on events.
- 1.6 Make each calendar available in all languages using Google Translator.
- 1.6a Provide links to teacher web pages on the district main page.
- 1.7 Update web pages by teachers/staff at regular intervals.

Strategic Intent #2 and Action Plans:

By the end of 2023-2024, 100 percent of the instructional staff will develop content on a platform for parents that will allow them to engage in discussions with their child about their child's learning.

- 2.1 Updates provided weekly by teachers on their webpage that includes an overview of what the students will be learning that week and questions the parents/caregivers/guardians can ask their child to glean information about what they are learning.
- 2.2 Conduct a survey to the community gauging the success of website improvements, including modifications to the calendar and the teacher/staff webpages.

Strategic Intent #3 and Action Plans:

In 2023-2024, 100 percent of the instructional staff (grade levels and departments) will establish at least one academic event either during the day or evening that involves parents/caregivers/guardians.

3.1 Determine the events for the year at the building level.

3.2 Events will be published on calendars and communicated in multiple ways including flyers and our social media platforms.

3.3 Track attendance at events and seek feedback to improve offerings.

Strategic Intent #4 and Action Plans:

By 2027, 80 percent of families will respond “agree” or “strongly agree” on a survey regarding communication and engagement initiatives over the past five years.

4.1 Implement survey to gauge effectiveness of communication and engagement with families.

Provide a summary of your findings, including your data, research and best practices review.

Research indicates home-school communication increases student success in many areas, including in their academics and behaviors. Best practices reviewed included communicating with families in their preferred methods and ways to share academic goals/topics and get support with those goals at home.

Provide any recommendations relative to your SMART goals, strategies, action plans and the implementation of this work.

- Consider conducting focus groups from within the community including parents, guardians, families and others to provide information on user-friendliness, priority information to communicate and how the potential changes are received.
- Conduct polls or surveys before and after implementation of strategies to provide feedback on next steps.
- Collaborate with the SWEA on intents regarding instructional staff responsibilities.
- Future considerations include exploring the development of other programs for families to support student learning at home and increase communication between families and school.



Task Force: Structures, Operations, Systems



Structures, Operations, Systems: Strategic Intent, Strategies and Action Plans

Charge:	Develop district wide systems to ensure policies and procedures are in place providing guidance and data for decision making and planning.
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Strategic Intent #1 and Action Plans:	
The district leaders will review, revise, and distribute required safety and security plans ensuring universal understanding and preparedness across all schools annually.	
1.1	The administrative team, in conjunction with the district safety team, will assess current emergency preparedness plans across the district to identify any deficiencies, changes, or updates so that all buildings are clear on expectations by September 2023.
1.2	The administrative team in conjunction with the district safety team will review and make recommendations related to the cyber incident response plan produced by the district technology team by June 2024.
1.3	In response to recent climatic events, the administrative team in conjunction with the district safety team will develop a disaster recovery plan by December 2025.

Strategic Intent #2 and Action Plans:	
The district leaders will analyze the demographic study to determine future space and instruction needs.	
2.1	The district will create a subcommittee to evaluate the district demographic study to determine future growth plans by January 2023.
2.2	The subcommittee will assess the demographic study to determine long range facility planning and make recommendations to the BOE by June 2023.
2.3	The district administration and BOE will oversee the long-range facility plans by June 2027.

Strategic Intent #3 and Action Plans:	
The district leaders will monitor and implement the energy and savings improvement plan (ESIP) to realize maximum energy savings.	
3.1	The district ESIP committee will analyze the energy savings plan produced by the ESCO by January 2023.
3.2	The district ESIP committee will prioritize energy savings measures and make recommendations by June 2023.
3.3	The district administration and Board will oversee implementation of energy savings measures by June 2026.

Strategic Intent #4 and Action Plans:

The district leaders will explore and evaluate internal human resources, systems, and procedures.

- 4.1 The district administration will review job descriptions of current professional positions by August 2023.
- 4.1a The district administration, in conjunction with appropriate associations, will review and revise current job descriptions for all professional positions by September 2025.
- 4.2 Central office in conjunction with district administration will explore integrations between digital platforms for optimal efficiencies by June 2024.
- 4.3 Central office in conjunction with district administration will explore application and onboarding processes for optimal efficiencies by June 2025.

Provide a summary of your findings, including your data, research and best practices review.

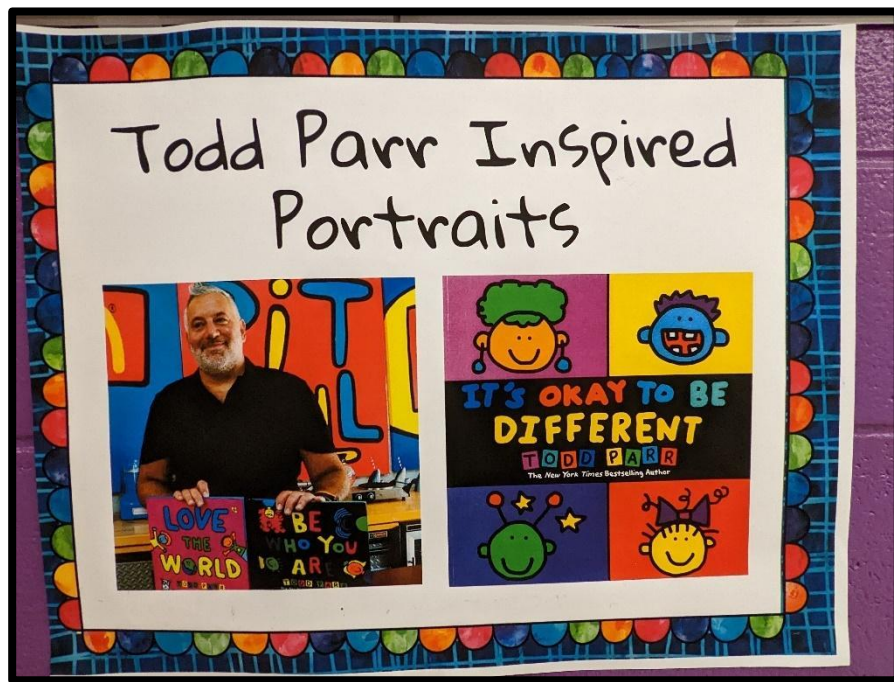
We feel as if the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District is in a very favorable place as a whole but there are some things internally that can be adjusted and enhanced to further strengthen us as a district and community.

Provide any recommendations relative to your SMART Goals, Strategies, Action Plans and the implementation of this work.

We want multiple stakeholders involved throughout all of these processes. We saw a common theme that all of our strategies and then each specific action plan was broken down into a “three-tier” process. See below for more in-depth details:

- Creation or Improvement (set by specific committees)
- Collaboration, recommendations and approvals (set by the administrative team)
- Approval and acting out of strategies and action plans (set by the central office and BOE)

Task Force: Student Experience



Student Experience: Strategic Intents, Strategies and Action Plans

Charge:	Develop a comprehensive set of programming to meet the social and emotional needs of students to support academic learning.
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Strategic Intent #1 and Action Plans:	
Design, develop, implement, and improve services and teaching practices that ensure students attain social and emotional health and have the skills necessary to be a respectful productive citizen.	
1.1	Evaluate the current PBSIS model.
1.2	Create a district-wide committee to review the positive behavior programs in each of the district schools with the intent to evaluate strengths, weaknesses and cohesiveness.
1.2a	Committee should consist of representatives from each of the building's climate/safety team.
1.3	Review of each building's harassment, intimidation and bullying data, discipline referrals, intervention and referral services, and behavior referrals.
1.4	Create a plan for implementation for the 2023-24 school year for a district character education plan.
1.5	Consider the feasibility of district-wide implementation of a trauma informed model through collaborative practice solutions program.
1.6	Provide an overview of child protection services (CPS) in the coming year to selected special education teachers, guidance counselors and administration.
1.6a	Establish a district-wide social-emotional learning (SEL) committee to conduct the following between January 2023 & June 2024:
1.6b	Review and update character education programs per building each year
1.6c	Explore and consider the feasibility of a district-wide character education program
1.6d	Explore and consider the feasibility character education programs by spans of kindergarten to grade two, grades three to five, and grade six.
1.6e	Communicate with building leadership for staff and community activities/involvement
1.6f	Review each building's harassment, intimidation and bullying data, discipline referrals, intervention, referral services and behavior referrals
1.6g	Evaluate the current PBSIS model

Strategic Intent #2 and Action Plans:

Identify and develop consistent activities to make all students feel welcome at all grade levels and eliminate gaps in learning opportunities and resources across the district.

2.1 Ensure PLC vertical articulation.

2.2 Consider transitional summer programs at the kindergarten and grade one and three levels.

2.3 Consider creating instructional videos created by SWSD staff as review material during summer months to be free and readily available to all students.

Strategic Intent #3 and Action Plans:

Create a safe, inclusive learning environment that fosters personal well-being.

Strategic Intent #4 and Action Plans:

Restructure the student code of conduct to incorporate restorative practices.

4.1 By the summer of 2024, develop a committee to determine the feasibility of implementing restorative practices as a district-wide model.

4.1a All staff, students, and stakeholders will be trained in restorative practices.

4.1b Provide professional development opportunities around restorative practices.

4.1c Include summer professional development to update codes of conduct kindergarten to grade two, grades three to five, and six.

4.1d Identify ways to bridge the gap between current and new discipline methods.

Strategic Intent #5 and Action Plans:

By the end of 2024 create and implement a plan to foster communication and collaboration between schools and families to support the needs and achievement of all students.

5.1 Research different methods of communication such as staff websites, newsletters, weekly email updates, etc.

5.2 Review and implement school-based activities to enhance program offerings.

Strategic Intent #6 and Action Plans:

By the end of 2025 provide regular and consistent learning opportunities for, and in collaboration with, the school community that is responsive to its needs.

6.1 Implement events that may include:

- Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) nights
- Open house
- Summer visits
- Drama shows
- Dr. Seuss night

- Winter wonderland
- Mindfulness nights with learning stations at each event with organizations and partners like the parent-teacher organization (PTO) and girl scouts.
- “Spring Fling”

6.2 Conduct a parent/student/teacher survey to get feedback on current offerings and potential future events.

Provide a summary of your findings, including your data, research and best practices review.

The following websites were used for research:

- Casel.org (researching the fundamentals of SEL)
- Njpbs.com (researching characteristics of positive behavior programs)
- Leaderinme.org (reviewing *Seven Habits of Healthy Kids*)

Additional data and research:

- Codes of conduct - all district buildings
- Current district curriculum for character education
- Activity calendars for all district schools
- Survey data

Our committee feels that there are a large number of student/family activities present in each of the four district schools that enhance the educational experience for all students.

Provide any recommendations relative to your SMART goals, strategies, action plans and the implementation of this work.

Our two greatest challenges lie in the need to create better connections between all school buildings, and to continue to develop programs that support student social and emotional growth.

Task Force: Teaching and Learning



Teaching and Learning: Strategic Intents, Strategies and Action Plans

Charge:	Develop a long-range plan to increase professional practice focused on supporting high levels of learning for all students.
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Strategic Intent #1 and Action Plans:

By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, 100 percent of teachers will actively utilize SMART goals with a universal understanding of how they guide instruction.

- 1.1 Utilize SMART goals with an understanding of how they are used to guide instruction. This may be developed in conjunction with student growth objectives.
- 1.2 Provide professional learning opportunities and ongoing support to develop and implement SMART goals.

Strategic Intent #2 and Action Plans:

By the 2023-2024 school year the district will identify a proactive, universal response to student behavior to support high levels of learning for all students.

- 2.1 Continue to promote positive behavior through PBSIS initiatives such as *Comet Cash* and/or *Pride Tickets*, *Star Tickets*, grade level and class rewards (e.g., movies, games, parties), positive office referrals, and positive notes/postcards home.
- 2.2 Conduct a survey to further enhance our offerings and recognitions through PBSIS programs.
- 2.3 Provide professional development across the district on managing student behaviors.
- 2.3a Provide both internal and external professional development on student behavior during in-service or faculty meetings.
- 2.3b Conduct research and a needs analysis to offer professional development (PD) targeted to specific behaviors.
- 2.4 District staff will develop consistency and common language when addressing student behavior.
- 2.4a Staff will ensure all code of conduct expectations are communicated and upheld.
- 2.4b Staff will ensure all PBSIS initiatives are implemented with fidelity.
- 2.5 District leaders will ensure all code of conducts are up to date, revised, and followed.

Strategic Intent #3 and Action Plans:

By 2023-2024, the district leaders will continue implementing a multi-year review of curriculum alignment across content areas to NJ State Standards.

- 3.1 Redesign the curriculum section on our website for families.
- 3.2 Create a page or link on our website that is easy to find and navigate for families of all students to connect curriculum to at home learning. Example: Google Sites.

- 3.3 Conduct an analysis to identify the causes of concern for curriculum alignment.
- 3.4 Implement equitable ways to allow for parent involvement and understanding.
- 3.4a Explore all options including the use of online and virtual resources and embedding videos to help gain more attendance in curriculum night activities.
- 3.5 Provide information on our website about material learned by students and standards-based grading.
- 3.6 Provide professional learning time for staff to conduct curriculum writing and annual revisions.
- 3.6a Research and implement structures that provide time within teacher schedules for PLC's and common planning opportunities.
- 3.6b Implement PLC structures to build opportunities for teams to conduct ongoing curriculum writing and building common plans and assessments.
- 3.6c Conduct annual audits and edits of curriculum in core testing subjects on a rotating basis. Examples: mathematics, English language arts (ELA), science
- 3.6d Create opportunities for vertical articulation meeting times across grade bands. Examples: grade four teachers meet with both grade three and grade five teachers to schedule, and consider splitting each grade level into thirds and rotate throughout year.
- 3.6e Create PLC and vertical articulation teams to include English language learners (ELL), special education (SPED), special areas, ACES teachers, nurses, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors. Consider and implement structures for those that work with students in multiple grade levels.

Strategic Intent #4 and Action Plans:

By the 2026-2027 school year, the district leaders will develop horizontal and vertical collaborative structures to support an integrated approach to student learning.

- 4.1 Conduct research and provide ongoing support.

Strategic Intent #5 and Action Plans:

By the start of the 2025 school year, the district leaders will research, pilot, and implement a universal system for students to track their own learning.

- 5.1 Pilot a universal system (Example: common scales) for tracking learning per grade level in reading and math.
- 5.2 Create and conduct staff surveys regarding understanding of learning scales, targets, and tracking.
- 5.3 Create and conduct a student survey to gauge student understanding and identify areas to support them tracking their learning.
- 5.4 Utilize grade level meetings, PLCs, and other times to develop and/or select common and required formative and summative assessments.
- 5.5 Share the district vision for use of scales with students and parents.
- 5.6 Identify a universal baseline in kindergarten to grade two for exposure of scales and understanding/ownership (e.g., letters/sounds, sight words, reading stamina and volume). For grades three through six, build understanding/ownership of each trimester's standards/scales with Google

Forms and/or data binders.

5.7 Identify expectations that targets and scales will be prepared in advance for each grade level.

Strategic Intent #6 and Action Plans:

By the 2024-2025 school year, the district leaders will develop programs for families to support their child's learning at home.

- 6.1 Publish student activity communications with enough time to translate information for all learners, especially our diverse learners.
- 6.2 Provide virtual access on this information in an easy to find central location for parents and families.
- 6.3 Conduct at least one content area support night in each school in 2023-2024 and gradually increase offerings in the following years.
- 6.4 Conduct a needs analysis family survey using multiple formats (digital, print, translated) to identify specific areas of needs to help develop support night events.
- 6.5 Explore the potential of providing after school tutoring/ mentoring by utilizing students from Kingsway in our buildings and assess transportation needs.

Provide a summary of your findings, including your data, research and best practices review.

The summary found that to incorporate the responsive classroom program will be more costly to the district. The plan will currently call for more exploration to potentially implement. The overall findings for our best practices will continue to evolve with time. Our plan is full of great material, but we will need time to implement and plan. We look to review the data points more in depth or gain more information to help best guide our next moves in reaching our strategic plan goals.

Provide any recommendations relative to your SMART goals, strategies, action plans and the implementation of this work.

The recommendations of our SMART goals and implementation are that we will constantly continue to evaluate progress and steps to accomplishing our goals. Some of our action items call for more time and research. While we did not have that initially with our aggressive timeline, we look forward to continuing our District growth and improvement.

Thank you to all who contributed their time, knowledge, and commitment in contributing to the Swedesboro-Woolwich Strategic Plan:

Superintendent

Dr. Walter Kappeler

Board of Education Members

Gina Azzari - President

Natalie Baker - Vice President

Kathryn Beaver

Erin Carroll

Laurie Cecala-Read

Julie Dickson

Vivian Lane

Tamara McGovern

Core Team Members

Carolynne Sandy

Darrell Ford

Eva Henry

Gina Azzari

Heather Worrell

Jamie Flick

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Jeni Boston

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Swedesboro-Woolwich School District:

"A community dedicated to inspiring life-long learners."

