



The Stillwater Elementary School District

Is Creating a New Five-Year Strategic Plan

The 3D Strategic Planning Process: Dream, Determination, and Destiny by Design

Session 2: What Is Our Vision for the Stillwater Elementary School District?

On the evening of **February 11, 2020**, a cross-section of our stakeholders--community members, parents, educators, school district Administrators, and members of the Stillwater Board of Education--came together at the Stillwater Elementary School to continue the process of strategic planning. Over the course of three meetings, our work will focus on both the realities of, and our visions for, the school district. This work will form a new Strategic Plan that shall guide the district for the next five years. The first evening's session examined the current strengths and achievements of, and challenges and opportunities facing, our community and school. Our second meeting's focus and work revolved around our individual and collective visions for the Stillwater Township Public School District in the future.

After a warm welcome from Board President Dennis DeGroat and Superintendent William Kochis, we reviewed the reasons for and the methodology of creating a new Strategic Plan.

We then advanced to a visioning exercise: each of us imagined being away from Stillwater for five years and returning home, to find the Stillwater Township Elementary School has been featured in a Time Magazine cover story as a national model for 21st-century education. The group was asked to ponder, *what would you envision occurring in our school to make this happen? What would be the title of such an article, touting such astonishing success? What would be the key visions in the article—meaning, what would be the means the district would have used to make such exemplary educational success a reality—if there had been **no** pre-determined mandates nor limits on resources?* Participants then divided into four small groups to develop a shared vision.

The information on the following pages is the work of the small groups, each of which wrote a title for the hypothetical Time Magazine article described above, and key visions that the article would comprise. Underlying all of our work is the District's Mission Statement, which serves as a guiding set of principles, and was featured in the evening's presentation and distributed to all participants.



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

The information that follows is the work of the small groups. As discussed with the participants, all meeting outcomes will be recorded and posted on the school district website at **www.stillwaterschool.net**, and shall be used at our next meeting to inform the final work in preparing the district's new Strategic Plan.

Group #1

Title of Article: "Charting a Course to Redefine Community from Local to Global"

Key Visions:

- Interpersonal communication
- Self-regulation and developing resolve
- School is embraced as the hub of the community
- Educated and active stewards of the Earth
- Individualized education plans highlighting each child's gifts and interests
- Structures in place to promote and enhance creativity and facilitate a growth mindset

Group #2

Title of Article: "Blooming Where They Are Planted"

Key Visions:

- Innovative learners
- Lifelong learners, tolerant & confident
- Person to person communication / proper social skills
- Kind, respectful, tolerant
- Positive culture / STEAM
- Critical thinkers / perseverance / determination
- Life skills / self-sustainability
- Personalized learning, working at their own pace
- Civic duties / service / philanthropy
- Student service projects / community group projects

(Continues on the following page)



Group #3

Title of Article: “Stillwater Students Become Independent Thinkers!”

Key Visions:

- Critical thinking
- Social/Emotional Learning
- Authentic experiences
- Media literacy
- Self-advocacy
- Global competence
- Problem-based learning model

Group #4

Title of Article: “Stillwater School Develops Limitless Connections”

Key Visions:

- Lost Arts – Home Ec, Shop Class, Etiquette, IRL & Digital, Agriculture
- Professional development—Training Without Limits: research, sabbaticals, teacher exchange programs
- Whole Student Development—Phones for Buttons, themed learning, theater, enhanced sports, flexible grouping -- interest-based, multi-age
- Facilities Development—A/C, state-of-the-art gym, ropes course, outdoor equipment, time to use it

After sharing and discussing the groups’ work with the entire group, and considering the outcomes of the first session, we identified three consistently emerging themes, or, “common threads.” These three major themes identify the three goal areas for the new Strategic Plan. We also saw that several sub-themes were emerging, which should be incorporated within these goal areas, as follows.

1. Teaching and Learning
 - Technology
 - Communication
2. Global Citizenship
 - Stewards of the Earth
 - Communication

(Continues on the following page)



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

(Goal Areas, continued from the preceding page)

3. Community
 - Communication
4. Whole Child
 - Practical life skills
 - Communication

At the conclusion of the work session, President DeGroat expressed his deep gratitude on behalf of the Board and Administration to the participants for their wide-ranging contributions and collaborative work.

Our next meeting is set for **Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 7pm at the Stillwater Elementary School.** We will write draft Goal Statements and supporting Objectives for each of the four goal areas. Participants will self-select in which Goal Area they would like to work. As in past meetings, individuals will work together in small groups, but they will not be randomly assigned; each person will work in the goal area in which they have the greatest interest. New and current participants from all facets of the community and our stakeholder groups are welcome to join us for this most important meeting. We look forward to working with you at our final session!

We look forward to seeing you at our third meeting on March 5. Attend with a friend!



OUR MISSION STATEMENT: The Stillwater Township School, a high-achieving, rural school of excellence, works in partnership with students, parents, staff and a caring community to provide every student a progressive and nurturing educational environment designed to maximize individual potential, instill self-esteem, promote citizenship and foster an appreciation for local history and a passion for life-long learning.

To achieve this end, the Stillwater Education Partners will:

- Provide a challenging, dynamic educational program that meets the needs and talents of each individual student and enables them to achieve and exceed the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at each grade level;
- Encourage the capacity to think critically, solve problems and work in a cooperative manner;
- Provide opportunity for community input and advice;
- Emphasize continuing staff and curriculum development; and
- Utilize district resources in an efficient manner.



The Stillwater Elementary School District

Is Creating a New Five-Year Strategic Plan

The 3D Strategic Planning Process: Dream, Determination, and Destiny by Design

Session 2: What Is Our Vision for the Stillwater Elementary School District?

On the evening of **February 11, 2020**, a cross-section of our stakeholders--community members, parents, educators, school district Administrators, and members of the Stillwater Board of Education--came together at the Stillwater Elementary School to continue the process of strategic planning. Over the course of three meetings, our work will focus on both the realities of, and our visions for, the school district. This work will form a new Strategic Plan that shall guide the district for the next five years. The first evening's session examined the current strengths and achievements of, and challenges and opportunities facing, our community and school. Our second meeting's focus and work revolved around our individual and collective visions for the Stillwater Township Public School District in the future.

After a warm welcome from Board President Dennis DeGroat and Superintendent William Kochis, we reviewed the reasons for and the methodology of creating a new Strategic Plan.

We then advanced to a visioning exercise: each of us imagined being away from Stillwater for five years and returning home, to find the Stillwater Township Elementary School has been featured in a Time Magazine cover story as a national model for 21st-century education. The group was asked to ponder, *what would you envision occurring in our school to make this happen? What would be the title of such an article, touting such astonishing success? What would be the key visions in the article—meaning, what would be the means the district would have used to make such exemplary educational success a reality—if there had been **no** pre-determined mandates nor limits on resources?* Participants then divided into four small groups to develop a shared vision.

The information on the following pages is the work of the small groups, each of which wrote a title for the hypothetical Time Magazine article described above, and key visions that the article would comprise. Underlying all of our work is the District's Mission Statement, which serves as a guiding set of principles, and was featured in the evening's presentation and distributed to all participants.



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

The information that follows is the work of the small groups. As discussed with the participants, all meeting outcomes will be recorded and posted on the school district website at **www.stillwaterschool.net**, and shall be used at our next meeting to inform the final work in preparing the district's new Strategic Plan.

Group #1

Title of Article: "Charting a Course to Redefine Community from Local to Global"

Key Visions:

- Interpersonal communication
- Self-regulation and developing resolve
- School is embraced as the hub of the community
- Educated and active stewards of the Earth
- Individualized education plans highlighting each child's gifts and interests
- Structures in place to promote and enhance creativity and facilitate a growth mindset

Group #2

Title of Article: "Blooming Where They Are Planted"

Key Visions:

- Innovative learners
- Lifelong learners, tolerant & confident
- Person to person communication / proper social skills
- Kind, respectful, tolerant
- Positive culture / STEAM
- Critical thinkers / perseverance / determination
- Life skills / self-sustainability
- Personalized learning, working at their own pace
- Civic duties / service / philanthropy
- Student service projects / community group projects

(Continues on the following page)



Group #3

Title of Article: “Stillwater Students Become Independent Thinkers!”

Key Visions:

- Critical thinking
- Social/Emotional Learning
- Authentic experiences
- Media literacy
- Self-advocacy
- Global competence
- Problem-based learning model

Group #4

Title of Article: “Stillwater School Develops Limitless Connections”

Key Visions:

- Lost Arts – Home Ec, Shop Class, Etiquette, IRL & Digital, Agriculture
- Professional development—Training Without Limits: research, sabbaticals, teacher exchange programs
- Whole Student Development—Phones for Buttons, themed learning, theater, enhanced sports, flexible grouping -- interest-based, multi-age
- Facilities Development—A/C, state-of-the-art gym, ropes course, outdoor equipment, time to use it

After sharing and discussing the groups’ work with the entire group, and considering the outcomes of the first session, we identified three consistently emerging themes, or, “common threads.” These three major themes identify the three goal areas for the new Strategic Plan. We also saw that several sub-themes were emerging, which should be incorporated within these goal areas, as follows.

1. Teaching and Learning
 - Technology
 - Communication
2. Global Citizenship
 - Stewards of the Earth
 - Communication

(Continues on the following page)



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

(Goal Areas, continued from the preceding page)

3. Community
 - Communication
4. Whole Child
 - Practical life skills
 - Communication

At the conclusion of the work session, President DeGroat expressed his deep gratitude on behalf of the Board and Administration to the participants for their wide-ranging contributions and collaborative work.

Our next meeting is set for **Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 7pm at the Stillwater Elementary School.** We will write draft Goal Statements and supporting Objectives for each of the four goal areas. Participants will self-select in which Goal Area they would like to work. As in past meetings, individuals will work together in small groups, but they will not be randomly assigned; each person will work in the goal area in which they have the greatest interest. New and current participants from all facets of the community and our stakeholder groups are welcome to join us for this most important meeting. We look forward to working with you at our final session!

We look forward to seeing you at our third meeting on March 5. Attend with a friend!



OUR MISSION STATEMENT: The Stillwater Township School, a high-achieving, rural school of excellence, works in partnership with students, parents, staff and a caring community to provide every student a progressive and nurturing educational environment designed to maximize individual potential, instill self-esteem, promote citizenship and foster an appreciation for local history and a passion for life-long learning.

To achieve this end, the Stillwater Education Partners will:

- Provide a challenging, dynamic educational program that meets the needs and talents of each individual student and enables them to achieve and exceed the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at each grade level;
- Encourage the capacity to think critically, solve problems and work in a cooperative manner;
- Provide opportunity for community input and advice;
- Emphasize continuing staff and curriculum development; and
- Utilize district resources in an efficient manner.