



The School District of

**SOUTH ORANGE
& MAPLEWOOD**

525 Academy Street • Maplewood, NJ 07040

SOMSD Strategic Plan

Presented January 25, 2016

The Charge

Since the convocation on the first teacher day, through the Education Summit and ensuing conversations, we have been engaging the community in thinking about education differently:

- Think about what we need to do as a school system to prepare students for a future that we have yet to imagine.
- How do we move away from trying to recreate an old system to creating a new system?
- How do we move away from a system created for needs of the industrial era to a system that leads our society into and through the information era?
- Don't think outside the box – throw away the box!

The Context

- The Strategic Plan will serve as the blueprint to guide the District's work for the next 3-5 years.
- Multi-phase process, with a wide variety of perspectives included in every step along the way.
 - Listening Tour
 - Education Summit
 - Let's Talk and other communications tools
 - Strategic Direction Committee
 - Action Planning Teams
- Collaborative effort so that the plan ultimately represents the values of our community and the needs of our students.

Strategic Planning Timeline

Phase	Task	Timeframe
Data Collection	<p>Collect feedback from the community about ideas, suggestions, hopes and concerns in a variety of ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-wide Education Summit, • KIVA on Mathematics, • Town hall meetings with the Superintendent, • Student forum, • Individual dialogues using Let's Talk! and other communication tools. 	October 2015 – January 2016
Data Synthesis	Incorporate all feedback collected by January 4 th into synthesis of the data to serve as foundation for Strategic Plan.	December 2015 – January 2016
Strategic Direction	Committee of stakeholders develops a Strategic Direction document stating our mission for the next 3-5 years, the values which will guide our work, the objectives for students' performance, and the strategies that adults are committing to in order to support students in reaching these objectives. The final document will be submitted to the Board of Education for review and approval.	January 2016
Action Planning	Working committees create specific, concrete plans for each strategy, including who will be responsible for what, by when.	February – August 2016
Implementation and Monitoring	The Strategic Plan will serve as the blueprint to guide the District's work for the next 3-5 years. The Superintendent will update the Board and community monthly on progress in implementation.	August 2016 and beyond

The Strategic Direction Process

- Facilitated by Rocco Rainone, Jr., and Marilyn Gounaris from SoarPoint Associates, who have decades of experience developing strategic plans with schools and school districts.
- 3-day intensive meeting held off-site.
- Many thanks to:
 - The Achieve Foundation for using their annual Superintendent’s grant to fund the \$15,000 cost for the consultants.
 - Temple Sharey Tefilo Israel for donating meeting space in their Mansion and graciously hosting us for 3 days.
- Committee members selected to include wide variety of perspectives, experiences with every age group and school in the district, and outside expertise.
- Data from the Education Summit and other community input infused into the discussions all 3 days.
- Scaffolded process, with large group instructions, small group work, and large group work and consensus building on every component.

Strategic Direction Committee

Name	Affiliation
Elizabeth Aaron, MAT, M.Ed.	Principal, Columbia High School
Thomas Borello	Parent, Architect
Beth Daugherty	Board of Education Member, Systems Engineer
Walter L. Fields	Parent, Journalist, SoMa Black Parents Workshop
Yolande Fleming	Teacher, Clinton Elementary School
Maudjah Francis, LPC	Parent, Psychotherapist, Parenting Center Coordinator of Haitian Family Outreach
William Gaudelli, Ed. D.	Chair of Department of Arts and Humanities, Teachers College, Columbia University
David R. Giles	Parent, Special Education Attorney
Marc Gold	Assistant Principal, Maplewood Middle School
Susan Grierson	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, SOMSD
Devyani Guha	Parent, Urban Planner, Collective for Community Culture and Environment
Nirlange Heriveaux	CHS Student, MAC Scholar
Karen Wisham Hudson	Parent, Business Consultant
Nina Kambili	CHS Student, Student Representative to the Board of Education

Strategic Direction Committee

Name	Affiliation
Annemarie Maini	Board of Education Member Director of South Orange Country Day School
Lynn McGlotten	Teacher, South Orange Middle School
Charles Mitchel, Ed.D.	Associate Professor and Executive Director of The Academy for Urban School Transformation, Seton Hall University
Tyler Perry	CHS Student
John J. Ramos, Jr., Ed.D.	Superintendent of Schools
Audrey Rowe	Program Director, South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race
Mara Rubin	Supervisor of Fine and Performing Arts, SOMSD
Filip Saulean	CHS Student Alternate Student Representative to the Board of Education
Peri Smilow, Ed.M.	Parent, Singer/Songwriter, Community Educator
Marisa Stoessel	Teacher, Jefferson Elementary School
Scott Stornetta, Ph.D.	Teacher, Columbia High School
Kevin Walston	Assistant Superintendent for Administration, SOMSD
TJ Whitaker	Teacher, Columbia High School

Enduring Values

An enduring value statement describes how everyone throughout the district is expected to communicate with, relate to and treat one another. It applies to students, families, teachers, staff, administrators, board members and community partners.

SOMSD's Enduring Values

- We value equity and excellence.
- We value students as our primary stakeholders and at the heart of every decision.
- We value the intrinsic potential of every student for continual learning and growth.
- We value and honor our commonalities and our differences.
- We value respectful, transparent and consistent communication in a safe environment.
- We value, in every interaction, empathy, care and compassion.
- We value civic discourse.
- We value collaboration, shared responsibility and accountability for our learning community.
- We value transparency and collaboration in decision making.

Mission

A Mission Statement is a concise statement that captures the strategic direction of the district. It states the district's purpose, identifies its clients, and explains broadly how the district will accomplish its purpose.

SOMSD's Mission

The mission of the South Orange Maplewood School District is to empower and inspire each student to explore and imagine, to pursue personal passions, and to collectively create a better future by creating a learner-centered environment through multiple pathways; reimagined structures, systems and supports; innovative teaching; partnering with families; and maximizing community expertise and resources.

Strategic Boundaries

A strategic boundary is a self-imposed limit that states what the district will always do or never do. It guides the district to make substantive decisions consistent with its enduring values. Equally important is a strategic boundary further defines the mission. Strategic boundaries must be enforceable.

SOMSD's Strategic Boundaries

We will always:

- Ask what is best for the student, as the main driver in our decision making.
- Equip our teachers with relevant tools and resources to create a learner-centered environment.
- Make decisions based on improving learning outcomes for students.
- Encourage students to take an active role in their learning.
- Act honorably and treat each student with respect in upholding our enduring values.

We will never:

- Give up on any student.
- Stop cultivating rapport with families.
- Allow identity to define potential or determine educational opportunity.
- Compromise our enduring values.

Student Performance Statement

A student performance statement describes a high expectation for student achievement and/or performance and the way in which it will be observed, demonstrated and/or measured. Student Performance Statements are driven by the Enduring Value Statements, Mission, and Strategic Boundaries.

SOMSD's Student Performance Statement

All students in SOMSD will have access to relevant curriculum that is not bound by seat-time but guided by teachers through demonstrated student mastery of competence in subject areas. Courses will leverage the rich and growing network of learning resources (e.g., online resources, collaborative partnerships, collective projects, field experiences, mentoring opportunities, and service learning) to meaningfully support the individual growth of students in these competencies, as measured by rubrics and student portfolios.

Strategies

A strategy is a broad statement consistent with district's values and strategic boundaries.

It describes how resources will be used to achieve the mission and student performance statements.

A strategy represents an idea in which the district is willing to invest energy, expertise, time and resources.

Strategies are broad enough to yield a variety of programs, services or approaches.

Each strategy will generate about five or six action plans which will be written later during action planning.

SOMSD's Strategies

- We will redesign curriculum, instruction and assessment to support learner-centered environments (e.g. reimagining seat-time, multiple pathways, competency standards).
- We will develop multiple supports for students to thrive in a learner-centered environment (e.g. mentoring program, peer leadership, individualized academic/emotional support, transitional services, restorative practices and guidance in pursuit of their passions).
- We will work with students to redefine their role as active and engaged contributors to the learning experience of their schools and community.

SOMSD's Strategies

- We will provide ongoing, differentiated and relevant professional development to grow teachers and administrators to theorize, critique, examine, and explore in order to engage every student in a learner-centered environment.
- We will infuse cultural competency in every aspect of our learning community.
- We will partner with families in support of student growth.
- We will reimagine and redesign all aspects of student scheduling, use of facilities and administrative structures to guarantee alignment with mission.

SOMSD's Strategies

- We will maximize community expertise and external resources to provide multiple pathways for student and professional growth and learning.
- We will engage in robust, open, ongoing and transparent communications with all students, families, staff and community members to generate understanding, excitement, trust and support of our school community and its transformation.

Next Step: Action Planning

- An action planning team of 5-7 members will be formed for each of the 9 strategies.
- Each committee will have 2 co-chairs – one member of the Strategic Direction Committee and one with expertise in the area.
- The Strategic Planning consultants will conduct a 2-day training for all co-chairs and any other available action planning team members.
- Action planning teams will receive all of the notes from the Education Summit and ensuing dialogues, and from the small working groups in the Strategic Direction Committee, to serve as the foundation for their work.
- Action planning teams will meet regularly for several months to create specific, concrete plans for each strategy, including who will be responsible for what, by when.
- The action plans will then be submitted to the Strategic Direction Committee to ensure they align to the original intent, and to the Board of Education for approval.
- Membership on the action planning teams will once again include diverse viewpoints and expertise. Information on how to express interest in joining one of the teams will be available shortly.