



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Mahwah Public Schools

Session 2 of 3

Developing a Vision for the Mahwah School District in the Next 5 Years

On March 12, Mahwah Schools administration, staff, and parents came together to continue the strategic planning process. The second meeting's topic focused on creating a shared vision for the Mahwah Schools in the next five years.

The meeting, facilitated by Matt Lee from the New Jersey School Boards Association, began with an overview of the Strategic Planning process and the steps taken at the December 16, 2024 meeting.

To begin the visioning process, participants were asked to picture themselves in 5 years in the audience as the Mahwah Public School district is receiving an award for outstanding achievement in education - "Schools that Succeed." The participants were asked to envision what was written in an article found via a Google search which describes what the district did to warrant such high recognition - what programs / services / curriculum / student outcomes / best practices / facilities would you expect to see in your district that led to such success?

The various stakeholders then gathered in two breakout groups (Group 2 and Group 3) to brainstorm their visions of how the school achieved this remarkable success. Each group was asked to write a title for the article and come to a consensus on up to 5-8 key visions. Each group's outcomes were shared with all meeting participants. The session concluded with a description of common threads throughout the groups' work and an introduction of the concept of goals areas, which will be the high-level framework for the strategic plan.



Group Work

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district's website <https://www.mahwah.k12.nj.us/25-30-strategic-planning>, to share the group work during the strategic planning process.

Group #1

Title of Article: Mahwah empowers students to thrive in the real world

Key Visions:

- Develop student leaders who take an active role inside of school and outside in the global community.
- Empower students to identify solutions through collaboration and independent research.
- Differentiated instruction through all mediums (K-3 enrichment, including math).
- Real world life skills – cooking, basic auto mechanic, public speaking, group communication.
- Make learning accessible to foster understanding of history and current events to live and thrive in the modern



Group #2

Title of Article: Empowering today to lead tomorrow!

Key Visions:

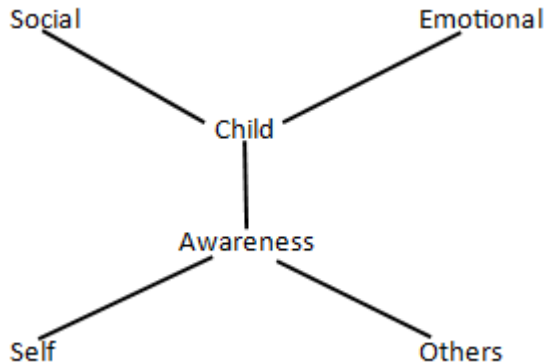
- Practical applications for real world readiness.
- A district that develops self-sufficient students outside of the classroom.
- Diverse opportunities for student success post-graduation (trade & career).
- Fostering community through collaboration and communication.
- Challenge early; challenge often

Group #3

Title of Article: Success for ALL at Mahwah Public Schools

Key Visions:

- Access to support services, tools, PD, technology.
- Creating Connections through extra-curricular activities.
- Benchmarks – progress monitoring.
- Personal/goals necessary.
- Local Community – best practices.
- Whole Child.
 - Meeting the needs.



- Innovative Facilities to encourage “Opportunities”.

Group #4

Title of Article: Building Bold Thinkers: Mahwah Schools Inspire both humanity and a confidence to innovate

Key Visions:

- Students excited to come/experience school.
- Developing “ready-made” problem solvers.
- Duality of human connection and technological connection/responsibility.
 - (Use AI to have more time to be human.)
 - (human and resourceful)
- Modern, cutting-edge flexible, adaptive learning spaces.
- Thinking outside the box, training our brain, flexibility of thought, build curiosity, mold your brain, train brain.
- Self-development, risk taking, hunger for improvement, expansion, visionary.



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- Learning how to “fail forward” to practice humility.

Group #5

Title of Article: Mahwah Leads in Preparing Students for Success Beyond School

Key Visions:

- Effective Social Skills
 - Modeling in-person communication.
 - Public speaking classes.
 - Mock interviewing.
 - “Buddy Up” program between/across grade levels and schools.
 - Train and enhance active listening skills and empathy.
- Ensure an authentic pathway for non-college-bound students.
- Educate students in lifetime healthy habits.
 - Educational lunch time/Home Ec., placing value on nutrition and food prep.

Group #6

Title of Article: Innovative Mahwah: The trailblazing district that is setting the standard!

Key Visions:

- Preparing students to be financially responsible citizens.



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- State of the art facilities.
 - Preparing students to be civically active on a local and state level.
 - Expansive offerings of sports and clubs.
 - Award winning performing and visual arts programs.
 - Access to the latest cutting-edge technology, programs, and tools.
 - Classroom to careers program sets the standard.
 - Grit, resiliency, and perseverance are at the core of each student.
 - Abstract thinkers who can problem solve, collaborate and cultivate their own positive futures.
 - Strong community connections for all students.

Group #7

Title of Article: “Mahwah: Successful Future Pathways Begin Here.”

Key Visions:

- Comprehensive programs to serve ALL.
- Development of transferable skills.
- Appreciating the differences of all.
- Children are seen/recognized for who they are.
- Partnering with and supporting families within the community.
- Academic Excellence – which means different things for different students.
- Ensuring physical and emotional safety for all.



Group #8

Title of Article: Mahwah Achieves Ranking of BEST School District in the State of New Jersey!

Key Visions:

Exceeding:

- Student Needs with Top Academics.
- Scores.
- Social-emotional Growth.
- State-of-Art Facilities: Performing Art Center, new Gym.
- Accepting Environment-multi-cultural programming for children & families.
- Top programs for differentiated curriculum for our diverse learners – Special Needs, G & T, ESL.

Group #9

Title of Article: Mahwah Focusing on Tomorrow, TODAY!

Key Visions:

- Preparing students for real life experiences.
 - Financial Literacy.
 - Independence/Self-Management.
 - Communication Skills (Formal & Informal).
- Staying Ahead in Technology.



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- Digital Citizenship.
 - Coding.
 - AI -> using appropriately.
 - Robotics.
 - Well Rounded Students/Healthy Balance.
 - Social Emotional Learning.
 - Hands-on Experiences – Fostering Creativity.
 - Team Building/Character Ed.
 - Intentional Movement

Group #10

Title of Article: Elevating Mahwah Schools to a World Class Standard

Key Visions:

- Facilities that compete with other high performing districts.
- Nutrition education/health/availability for all.
- Expand financial literacy to younger ages.
- Technology – using/guardrails/using creativity to make our students successful human beings with technology and AI.
- Research Skills – identifying reliable information.
- Continue to promote hands on learning with science and other subjects/content areas.
- Create a community/sense of belonging and confidence that Mahwah is world class.



Next Meeting:

The third strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

6:30 – 8:00 pm

During the April 9 meeting we will review the outcomes from Sessions 1 & 2 (Strengths & Challenges, Visions) and develop broad goal statements for each of the five goal areas above that emerged from Sessions 1 & 2, and related objectives for each goal area.

Please join us. Everyone is welcome! We look forward to seeing you!