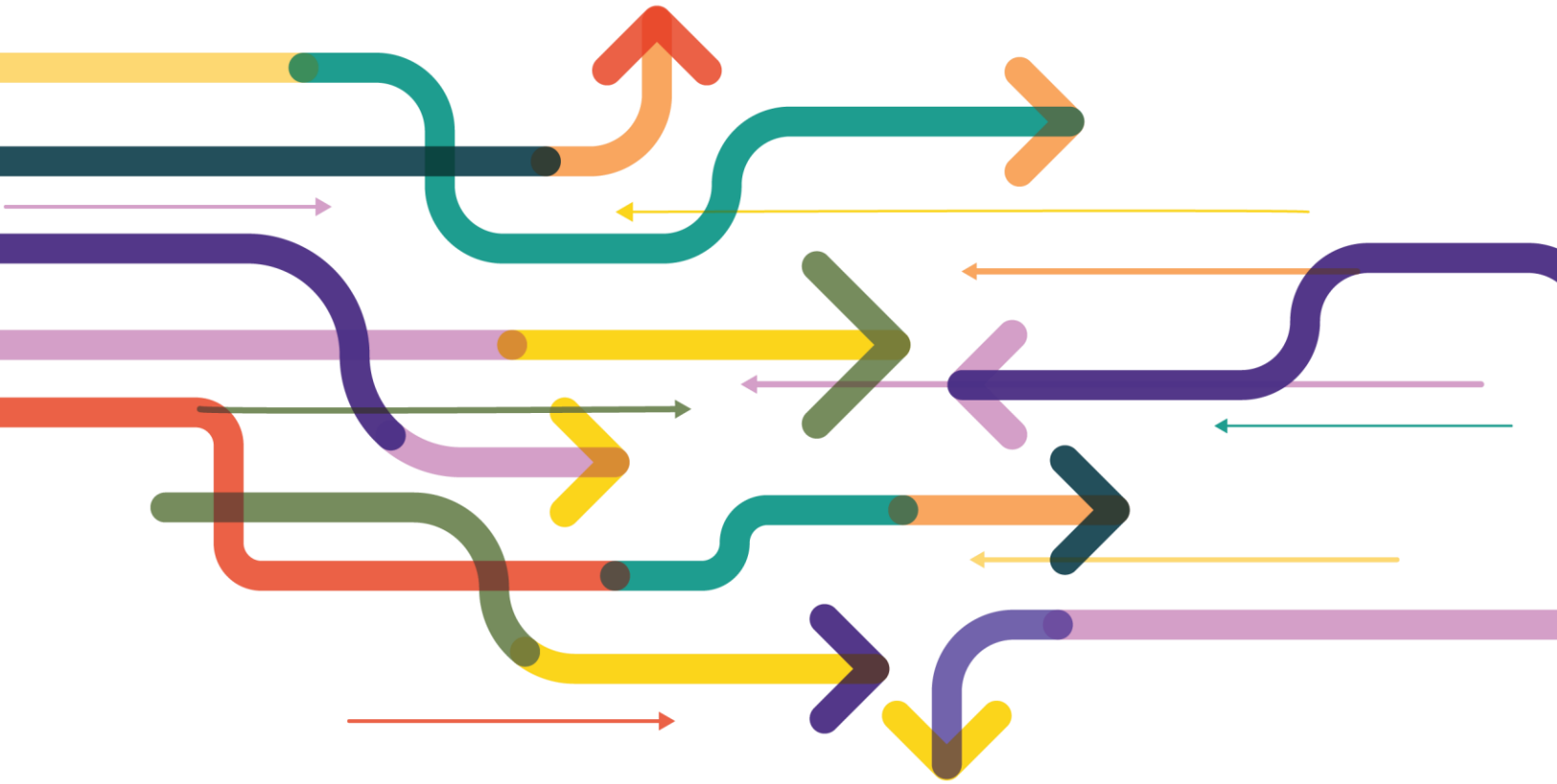
STRATEGIC PLAN
2026-2031

Prepared for the

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE & MAPLEWOOD

MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY



Facilitated by NJSBA Field Services Department

Jeanne Cleary, Field Service Representative

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The School District of South Orange & Maplewood Strategic Planning process, completed during the 2025 - 2026 academic year, could not have occurred without the support, cooperation and dedication of the following people:

BOARD OF EDUCATION

William Meyer, President
Elizabeth Callahan, 1st Vice President
Malini Nayar, 2nd Vice President
Jeffrey Bennett, Board Member
Deirdre Brown, Board Member
Meredith Higgins, Board Member
Bimal Kapadia, Board Member
Shayna Sackett-Gable, Board Member
Paul Stephan, Board Member

DISTRICT PERSONNEL

Jason Bing, Superintendent
Nicole Schoening, Business Administrator

NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Jeanne Cleary, Field Service Representative

ATTENDEE LISTING MEETING #1

March 16, 2026

Gracie Bennett	Jessica Miller
Jeffrey Bennett	William Meyer
Chi Brauner	Thomas Puryear
Samara Caplan	Jamie Ramsburg
Elizabeth Callahan	Melissa Randazzo
Ildi Conrad	Jocelyn Ryan
Sonya Dawes	Reesa Salomon
Rashad Davis	Rebecca Scheer
Kimberly Fox	Megan Schindel
Liz Gordon	Rena Shapiro
Alice James-Yudekovitz	Laina Stapleton
Regine Labossiere	Aaron Thompson
Edward LaPierre	Dr. Kyndell Pierce Tuttle
Elizabeth LiPuma	Nubia DuVall Wilson
Julie Madden	

ATTENDEE LISTING MEETING #2

April 15, 2026

Jennifer Antoni	William Meyer
Jodie Barnhart	Ifeoma Nwigwe
Heather Bruno	Laurie Rothenberg
Margaret Davis	Shayna Sackett-Gable
Laurie Goldfeder	Brad Schenker
Courtney Greenwald-Doria	Katie Schneider
Meredith Higgins	Alex Sefferman
Verna Holcomb	Scott Shimp
Kaitlin Jones	Lauren Sklaver
Thair Joshua	Paul Stephan
Elizabeth LiPuma	Dr. Kyndell Pierce
John Lockard	Tuttle
Tara Mallon	Jennifer Ward

ATTENDEE LISTING MEETING #3

May 11, 2026

Amy Fortunato	William Meyer
Caleb Salmon	Kimberly Fox
Chi Brauner	Yalonda Kirkland
Dr. Kyndell Pierce Tuttle	Liz Callahan
Elizabeth LiPuma	Thair Joshua
Jocelyn Ryan	Rashad Davis
John Lockard	Kate Schneider
Jordan Mann	Jackson McGarry
Judy Cha	Dr. Jenn Antoni
Julia Sommer	Ifeoma Nwigwe
Kaitlin Jones	Abigail Murtagh
Khadijah White	Peilud Shapiro
Margay (Maggie) Peters	Scott Shimp
Naviya Vadlamani	Shayla Berrios
Nubia DuVall Wilson	Daniel Caplan
Scarlet Strogov	Bimac Kapadia
Stephanie Bencivenga	Deirdre Brown

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Executive Summary

A. EDUCATING THE BOARD TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION

The School District of South Orange & Maplewood Board of Education entered into an agreement with New Jersey School Boards Association for Strategic Planning services.

On August 19, 2025, Jeanne Cleary presented information about the Strategic Planning services to the district and board of education at the scheduled board meeting.

The information supplied included a review of the following:

- commitment of time and resources.
- school and community level involvement.
- strategic planning to meet the needs of the district.
- the Board's role in the process.
- potential participants to be included in the process.

Additionally, on October 10, 2025 Jeanne Cleary had a phone conference with Jason Bing, Superintendent, and Board Members Nubia Duvall Wilson, Regina Eckert and William Meyer to discuss and plan for the logistics of the Strategic Plan meetings.

B. 3D STRATEGIC PLAN MEETINGS

On March 16, 2026, April 15, 2026, and May 11, 2026, Jeanne Cleary, Field Service Representative from NJSBA, facilitated the Strategic Planning meetings.

Outcomes of these meetings include:

1. Strengths and Challenges of the School District of South Orange & Maplewood
2. Vision 2026 – 2031
3. Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Outcomes from all three of the Strategic Planning Meetings are included in this notebook.

(Appendix A: State of the Schools Report)

(Appendix B: Meeting 1 – Strengths & Challenges Outcomes)

(Appendix C: Meeting 2 – Vision 2031 Outcomes)

(Appendix D: Meeting 3 – Strategic Planning Goal Setting Outcomes)

(Appendix E: Action Plans)

C. DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLANS

Following Strategic Plan Meeting #3, the Superintendent and administrative team developed action plans to implement the vision and goals developed in the Strategic Plan. The action plans include:

1. The actions necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives
2. Select measures for accountability
3. Resources required
4. A timeline for implementation
5. Indicators of success for each activity

(Appendix E –Action Plans)

D. PRESENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

At the request of the Superintendent, the final report will to be delivered to the Board of Education at an upcoming Board of Education meeting.

E. NEXT STEPS

Following the presentation of the action plans, the Board of Education will review and adopt the strategic plan. The superintendent and administrative team will implement the action plans for each of the identified goals. Upon approval of the plan by the board of education, it should be placed on the district website for staff, parents, and community members to access and follow. A copy of the plan should be on the board table at each board meeting to provide a framework for decision-making.

An annual State of the Strategic Plan presentation is highly recommended to reflect the progress being made on the strategic planning goals.

Mission Statement

The South Orange & Maplewood School District's mission is to awaken potential by inspiring students to imagine boldly, pursue their passions with purpose, and work together to create a brighter future. We do this by cultivating a learner-centered environment, opening multiple pathways to success, and reimagining the structures, systems, and supports that shape learning. Through innovative teaching, genuine partnership with families, and the collective wisdom of our community, we prepare our students not only to thrive but to lead, create, and transform the world they inherit.

GOAL AREAS

1. Infrastructure - Strong & Sustainable Infrastructure

2. Active Partnerships – Among Students, Staff, Parents, Administration and Community

3. Access – Equitable Access to Learning

4. Pathways to Success – College, Society and Career Readiness

GOAL AREA #1

INFRASTRUCTURE

Strong and Sustainable Infrastructure

Goal Statement #1:

Create a culture of financial sustainability through strong leadership and community investment that supports teaching and learning.

See Action Plans for all major activities.

GOAL AREA #2

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Among Students, Staff, Parents, Administration & the Community

Goal Statement #2:

To implement a fluid exchange of communication among community members to encourage productive collaboration, proactive solutions, and to ensure accurate information sharing, so that community members may make informed decisions and trust may be built.

See Action Plans for all major activities.

GOAL AREA #3

ACCESS

Equitable Access to Learning

Goal Statement #3:

Use the data available to develop and evaluate strategies that close the academic achievement gap and increase the learning opportunities for our most vulnerable students (students of color, neurodiverse students, ML students).

See Action Plans for all major activities.

GOAL AREA #4

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

College, Society & Career Readiness

Goal Statement #4:

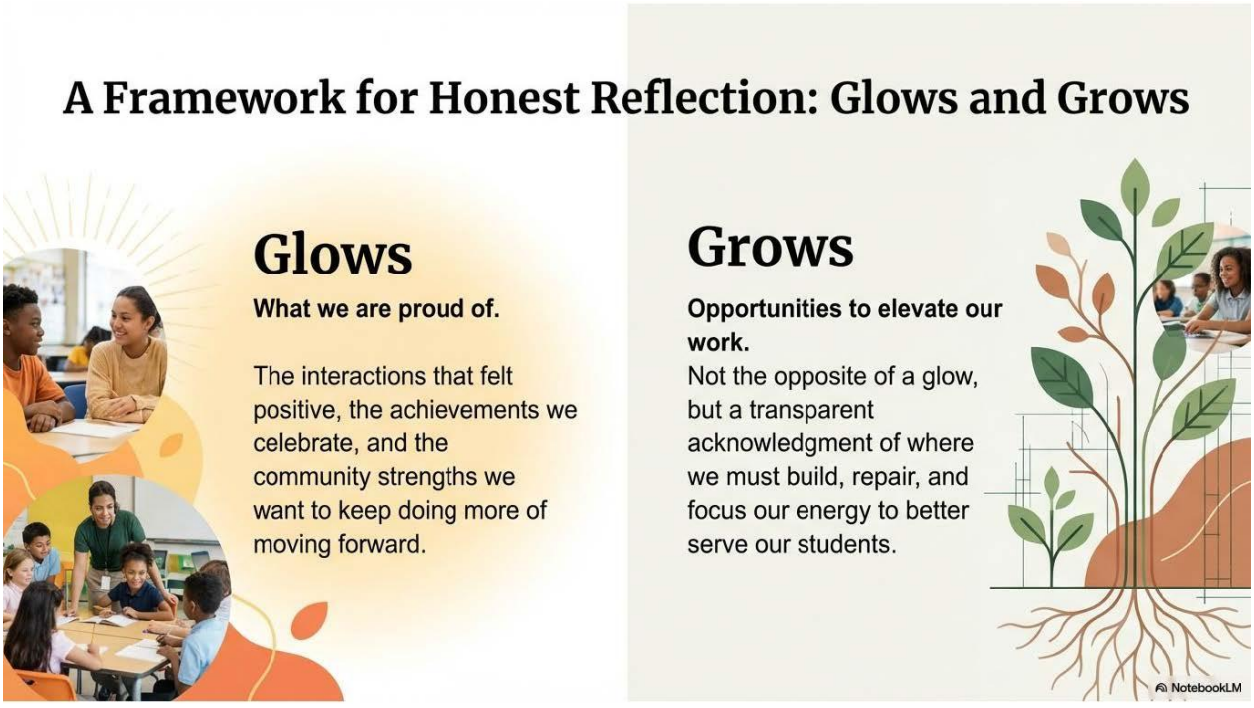
Through holistically supporting students throughout their educational career, and with an eye toward overcoming opportunity gaps, our students will leave high school feeling meaningfully connected to their community and prepared and supported both for higher education and their personal post-high school goals and pursuits.

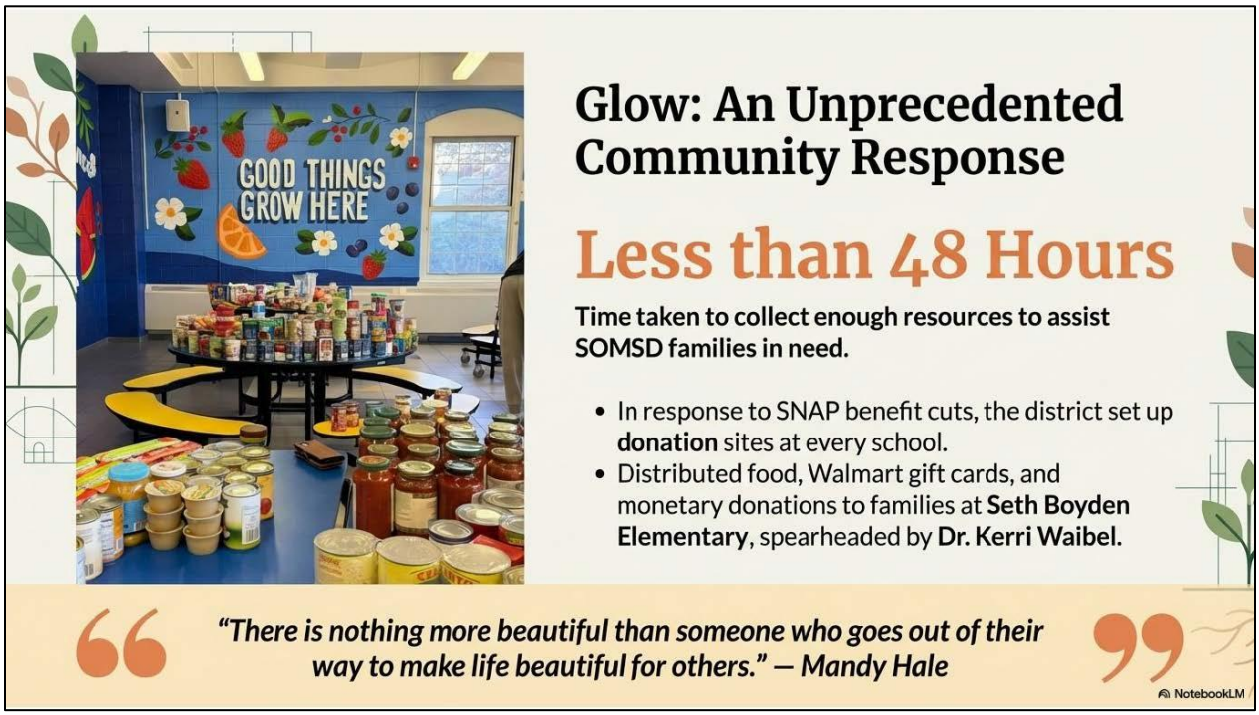
See Action Plans for all major activities.

APPENDIX A

Superintendent's Report: "State of the Schools"

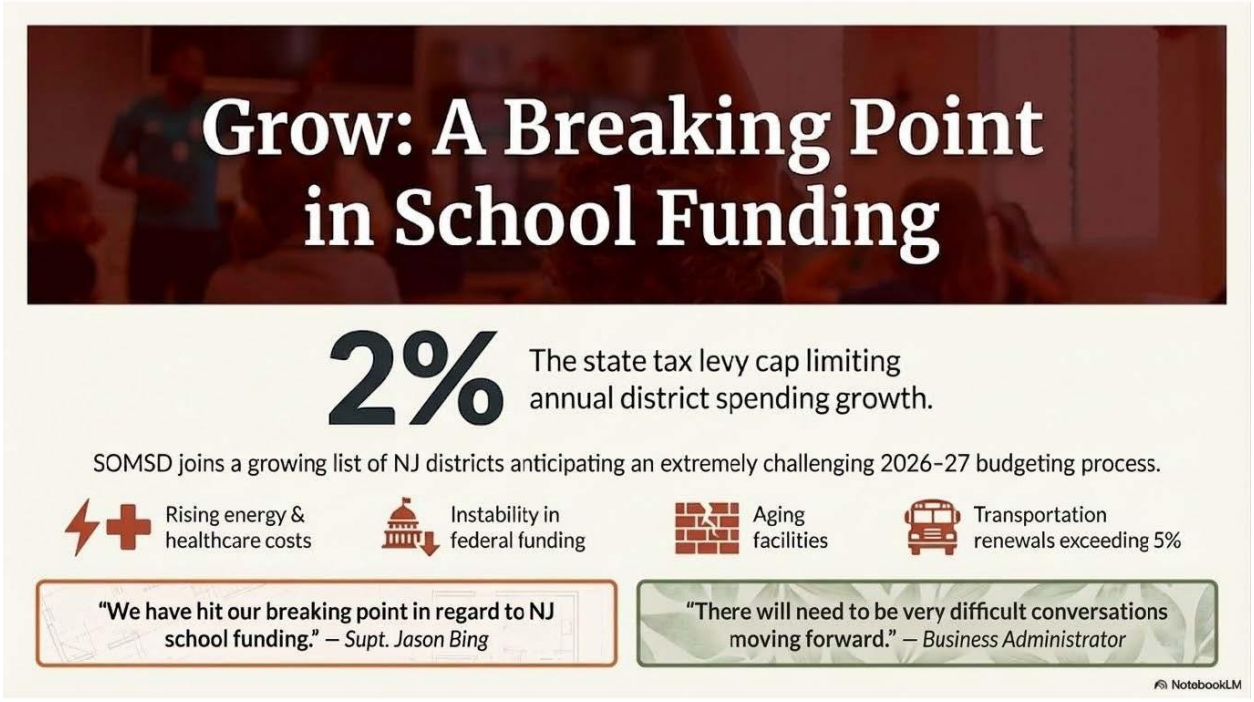

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
South Orange & Maplewood
"MANY VOICES. TWO TOWNS. ONE DISTRICT"
Strategic Plan: Progress, Challenges, and Our Path Forward
A comprehensive update for the South Orange & Maplewood School District Community


A Framework for Honest Reflection: Glows and Grows
Glows
What we are proud of.
The interactions that felt positive, the achievements we celebrate, and the community strengths we want to keep doing more of moving forward.
Grows
Opportunities to elevate our work.
Not the opposite of a glow, but a transparent acknowledgment of where we must build, repair, and focus our energy to better serve our students.
NotebookLM


GOOD THINGS GROW HERE
Glow: An Unprecedented Community Response
Less than 48 Hours
Time taken to collect enough resources to assist SOMSD families in need.
• In response to SNAP benefit cuts, the district set up donation sites at every school.
• Distributed food, Walmart gift cards, and monetary donations to families at Seth Boyden Elementary, spearheaded by Dr. Kerri Waibel.
"There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others." — Mandy Hale
NotebookLM


Glow: National Recognition and Local Talent
PASSPORT
2026 NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship
Jessica Cavagnaro (World Language Educator, Delia Bolden Elementary) was selected as one of only 50 educators nationwide (joining reps from Belgium and Japan) for this prestigious cohort.
"I cannot wait to see what you can bring back to SOMSD." — Superintendent Jason Bing
Francie Christensen
Columbia High School senior Francie Christensen has been awarded a Merit Award for her photograph titled "Sarah" at the Art Administrators of New Jersey (AANJ) Emerging Artists Exhibition, a prestigious annual program showcasing the state's most talented high school visual artists.
NotebookLM


Glow: Safer, More Supportive Schools
The 2024-25 Student Safety Data System (SSDS) Report highlights meaningful reductions in key incidents across several schools.
Restorative Practices
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
Proactive Supervision
We are building a safer, more supportive environment for every student, every day, with clear strategies for continued growth in targeted interventions and family communication.
NotebookLM


Grow: A Breaking Point in School Funding
2%
The state tax levy cap limiting annual district spending growth.
SOMSD joins a growing list of NJ districts anticipating an extremely challenging 2026-27 budgeting process.
Rising energy & healthcare costs
Instability in federal funding
Aging facilities
Transportation renewals exceeding 5%
"We have hit our breaking point in regard to NJ school funding." — Supt. Jason Bing
"There will need to be very difficult conversations moving forward." — Business Administrator
NotebookLM

Grow: Equity and the Special Services Experience



While diversity is our strength, achieving true equity and access remains a challenge. The 2024-2025 Special Services Experience Survey provided critical feedback on the CST process, inclusion, and IEP meeting satisfaction.

Identified Pain Points:

- Closing achievement gaps for Special Education (SPED) and English Language Learner (ELL) students.
- Ensuring equitable access to special education programs in neighborhood schools.
- Deepening the implementation of the Intentional Integration Initiative.

NotebookLM

Cultivating the Future: 2025-2026 District Goals

Student Achievement

Implementing K-9 smartphone bans, MTSS teams, and a new Freshman Academy.

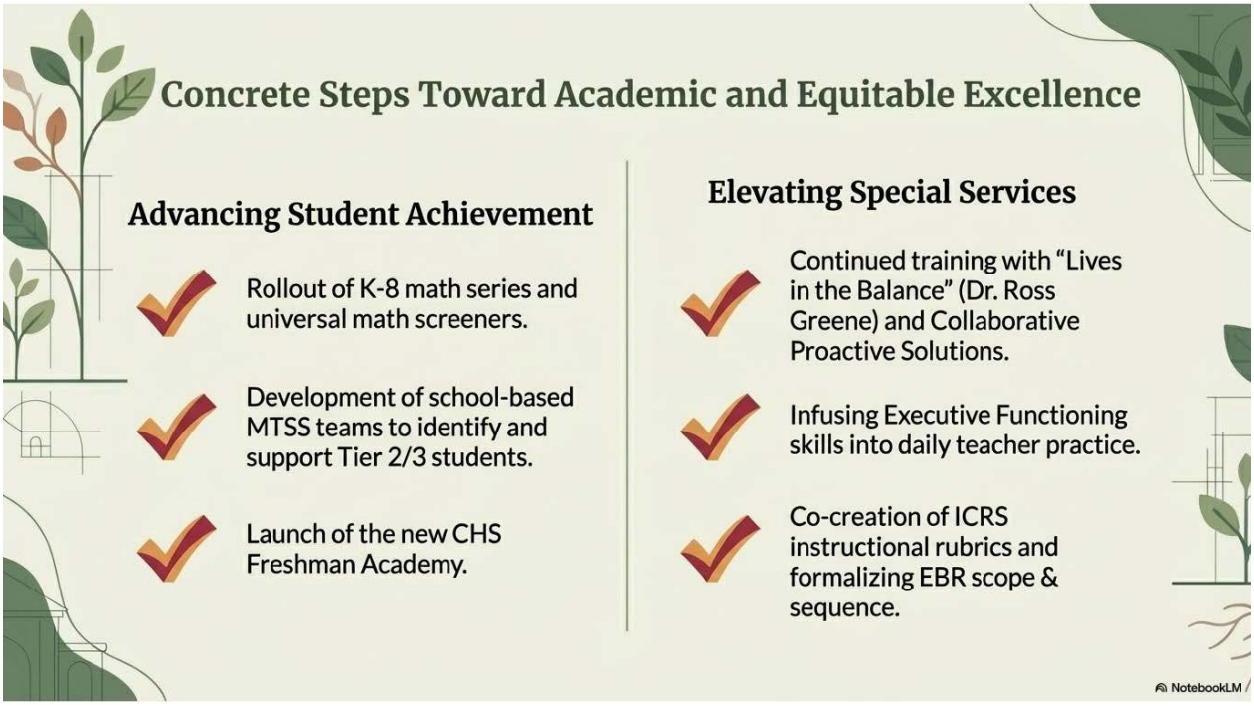
Special Services

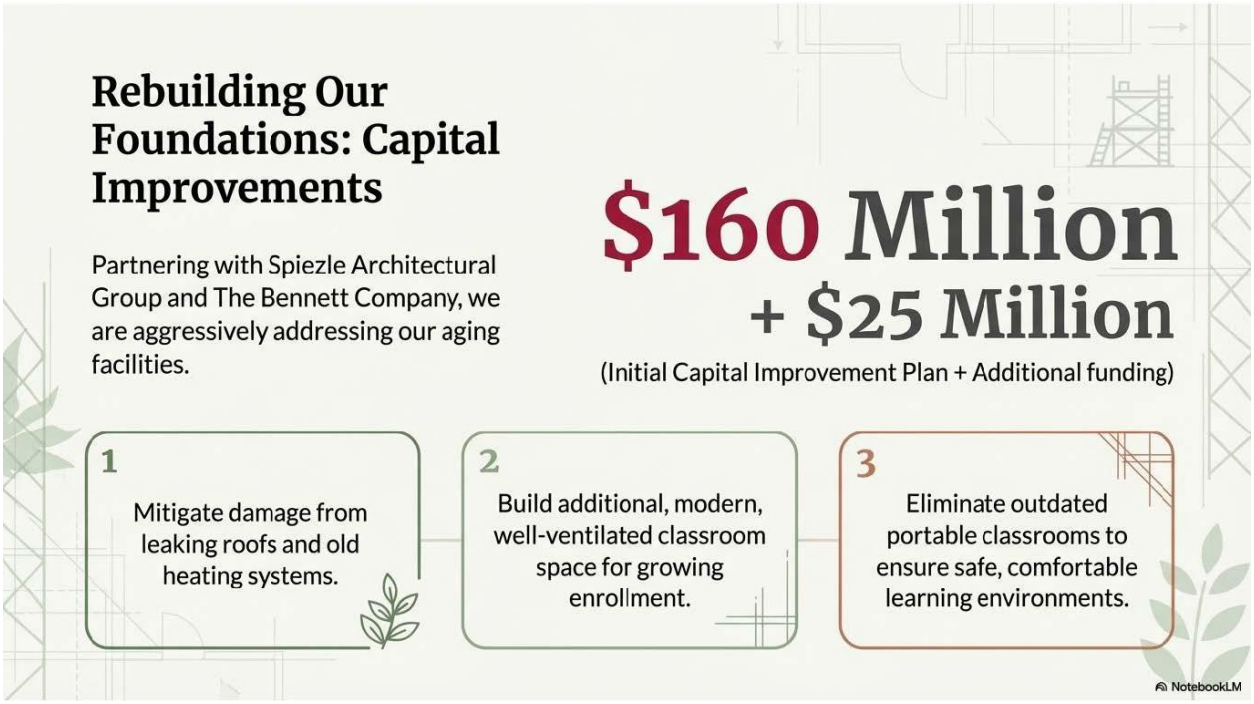
Strengthening collaborative learning and equitable access.

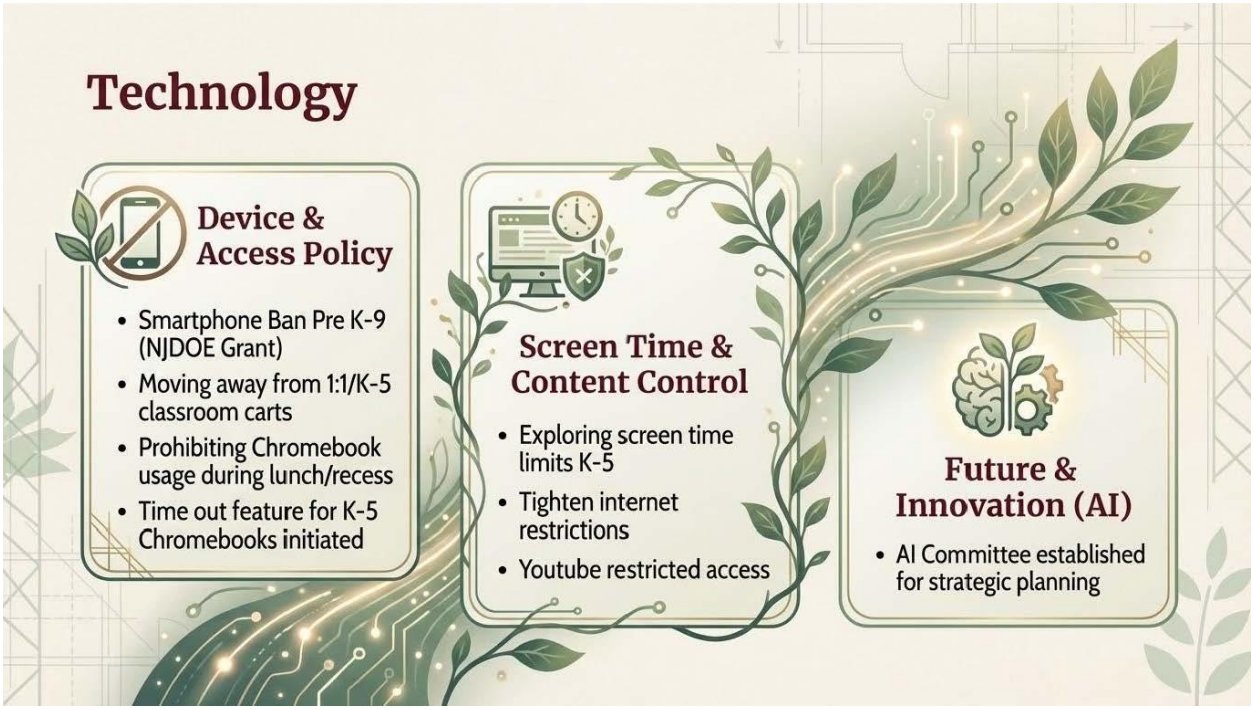
Operational Culture

Enhancing financial planning, reducing staff turnover, and launching "stay interviews".

NotebookLM


Concrete Steps Toward Academic and Equitable Excellence
Advancing Student Achievement
Rollout of K-8 math series and universal math screeners.
Development of school-based MTSS teams to identify and support Tier 2/3 students.
Launch of the new CHS Freshman Academy.
Elevating Special Services
Continued training with "Lives in the Balance" (Dr. Ross Greene) and Collaborative Proactive Solutions.
Infusing Executive Functioning skills into daily teacher practice.
Co-creation of ICRS instructional rubrics and formalizing EBR scope & sequence.
NotebookLM


Rebuilding Our Foundations: Capital Improvements
Partnering with Spiezle Architectural Group and The Bennett Company, we are aggressively addressing our aging facilities.
$160 Million
+ $25 Million
(Initial Capital Improvement Plan + Additional funding)
1
Mitigate damage from leaking roofs and old heating systems.
2
Build additional, modern, well-ventilated classroom space for growing enrollment.
3
Eliminate outdated portable classrooms to ensure safe, comfortable learning environments.
NotebookLM


Technology
Device & Access Policy
• Smartphone Ban Pre K-9 (NJDOE Grant)
• Moving away from 1:1/K-5 classroom carts
• Prohibiting Chromebook usage during lunch/recess
• Time out feature for K-5 Chromebooks initiated
Screen Time & Content Control
• Exploring screen time limits K-5
• Tighten internet restrictions
• Youtube restricted access
Future & Innovation (AI)
• AI Committee established for strategic planning


Charting the Path Forward: Strategic Planning 2026
We are launching a comprehensive, collaborative visioning process. We need staff, students, families, and community members to help identify strengths, address challenges, and build a shared vision grounded in transparency.
"Your voice is vital in helping shape a future-focused plan that supports every SOMSD student." — Supt. Jason Bing
NotebookLM


Moving Forward, Together.
Addressing our challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. We cannot do things the way they have always been done. Through transparency, collaboration, and a relentless focus on our students, we will continue to raise academic standards and meet the unique needs of our community.
Many voices, two towns, one district.
NotebookLM

APPENDIX B

Meeting 1 Outcomes

Strengths & Challenges

South Orange – Maplewood School District

Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes Report

March 16, 2026

Mission Statement

The South Orange & Maplewood School District's mission is to awaken potential by inspiring students to imagine boldly, pursue their passions with purpose, and work together to create a brighter future. We do this by cultivating a learner-centered environment, opening multiple pathways to success, and reimagining the structures, systems, and supports that shape learning. Through innovative teaching, genuine partnership with families, and the collective wisdom of our community, we prepare our students not only to thrive but to lead, create, and transform the world they inherit.

What are the Strengths, Achievements and Challenges of the South Orange - Maplewood School District?

On March 16, 2026, South Orange - Maplewood District administrators, staff, parents/guardians, and community members, thirty-two (32) in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The meeting began with Mr. Jason Bing, Superintendent, presenting the current "State of the Schools" report. Jeanne Cleary from the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) was present and reviewed the strategic planning process for the group.

Participants then gathered in eight small groups to identify the strengths and points of pride in the district and community, and to brainstorm what opportunities and challenges the school district faces. Each group identified their "top 10" list of strengths/accomplishments and challenges/opportunities for the district, which were then shared with the larger group of all participants. Underlying all the work is the District's Mission Statement.

The information that follows is the work of the eight small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all meeting outcomes will be listed in this memo and will be posted on the district website for the wider community to review. These outcomes will be used as the basis for Meeting #2 on April 15, 2026.

TABLE 1

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• Co-taught inclusion • Diversity • Our arts programs • Course offering variety at CHS • Elementary teachers as a whole • Athletics*see also challenges • Social work department at middle and high schools • Chinese Program • Istep/ ESS/ Loft/ Hub programs • Pre-k expansion • Community outreach efforts by current administration	• Inconsistency of experience from child to child and school to school • Teachers union is difficult to work with • Ineffective use of teacher evaluations to remove teachers that should be removed • Turnover in administration • Parents and community members are difficult to engage with • Community outreach to non-English speaking families, including not having important documents translated • Yearly financial struggles • Transportation • Achievement gap: Racial, SES, and SPED • Mental health challenges and being proactive about this • Athletics, cost, etc.

TABLE 2

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• The energy and enthusiasm in the buildings, mainly middle school • Easy to find your groups and more people that you fit in with as a student • Community involvement, community support with events and projects • Activities that are offered after school • Freshman Academy • Keith Bonds! • Freshman staying together for lunch • Teacher knowledge, do a good job • Conference periods • Students are confident with advocating for themselves and others • Kids!!	• Infrastructure - mold, rodents in buildings, etc. • Administrative level - no training for those that are moved into positions - no mentoring or training (more issues with administration, rather than with the teachers) • Utilize the expertise of those within the districts • MMS doesn't go outside for lunches, lunches were punitive • Bullying responses are not effective • Students treated equally across the district (policy created to standardize best practices) • The amount of IEP students being classified • Staff turnover • Programs coming and going before having a full plan; no follow through • Tracking system works better • Technology challenge using it as a tool in an effective way (AI is growing) • Consistency with systems • Vertical articulation of curriculum • Repetition and pacing of curriculum needs adjustment • Athletic facilities; places for kids to play (support for the Athletic Director)

TABLE 3

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• Supportive, engaged, talented parent communities • IT/technology department is very strong, organized, helpful • Wonderful, dedicated teachers • Dramatically improved communication • Noted improvements in transparency over recent years • Achieve programming and other district partnerships	• Administrative offices dealing with onboarding processes for both families and staff members could be improved • Blurred lines between district responsibilities and PTA/HSA supplementation • Definitive top-down universal guidance on expectations • PowerSchool • More collaboration amongst staff to ensure curriculum, instruction, and outcomes across schools are equitable • Redundancy and waste audit of underused systems • Greater commitment to transparency and earning trust from all stakeholders • Balanced class sizes across elementary schools

TABLE 4

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• Thoughtful about technology • Teachers are well-trained and engaged • Well-engaged Community • Arts in the middle school are high quality and well rounded (although may not be true at all elementary schools) • Opportunities for SEL and learning about diversity among students	• Lack of cohesive vertical reading curriculum (at the elementary level) • District communication is abundant at District level but not at school/classroom level • District communication is large in volume but not always carefully constructed, proofread or complete (example, invitation for tonight's event had no time in it).

• Cohesive math curriculum at the elementary level	• Special ed programming inconsistent across schools • Lack of science curriculum at elementary level • Lack of opportunity for hands on, project based, inquiry learning at elementary level • Lack of available information about academic programming at all levels (no info nights or info on website). • Poorly maintained facilities. • Principals seem distant and not engaged. • Lack of diverse/interesting specials at the elementary level

TABLE 5

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• High parent engagement • Amazing art program • Strong early childhood educators • Diverse high school course and extracurriculars • Students encouraged to self-advocate (like attending BOE meetings)	• Triple III • Transportation • Infrastructure to support • diversity • Representation (like hiring diverse teachers) • Lack of clear and timely communication • Attention to social-emotional learning and executive function differences • Need more challenging academics • Crumbling building infrastructure

TABLE 6

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• Positive curriculum changes for math and ELA • Lots of resources in our community (money and time, engagement) • Engaged community and community groups • Close proximity between buildings, has an opportunity for more connections/mentorships between kids • District events and communication has improved dramatically and helps with feeling connected with the district • Supportive schools for different groups of students (clubs and groups at the secondary levels) • Feels like we are cleaning up after many tough years (going in the right direction, slowly) • Great Teachers, Aftercare programs, sports, theatre, places for kids to shine • Civic engagement for our children • People and commitment to progress	• Communication from district to the community • Inconsistency between years - leadership • There is not an opportunity to have honest conversations community-wide • Consistency between what's being communicated district-wide and what's happening in the classroom • Mental health - what are the demographics? ○ Is III contributing to this? • Science and social studies are not covered in elementary in a real way, is Amistad curriculum in use? • Math is still concerning because all groups aren't doing equally well, AP courses underenrolled by Black students • Aftercare / pre-k can be better taken advantage of in terms of academics so that kids have more equal footing • Communication black box in elementary spaces - no uniformity in the schools and

	parents have to proactively act to get information - how are we communicating to families - this is a missed opportunity to connect families to what is learned and any incidents that have happened • The community isn't well-versed in our outcomes - example, graduation rates and which kids are doing well, and which need more help • Communication • Student outcomes - academic / mental health • Consistency

TABLE 7

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• High quality staff • Dedicated parents and high community engagement • Roll out of new math curriculum (K-8) • Socially engaged students • Moral clarity and community passionate • Frank Sanchez is an asset to the district and it's key that he is staying • High school curriculum is rigorous enough to prepare for college • Freshman Academy • Diverse community	• Chronic absenteeism • Ethnic/racial achievement gaps • Graduation rate • Lower NJSLA scores in ELA & Math • Increased incidents of mental health concerns • Consistent approach to mental health for staff • Executive functioning beginning in the middle school • Consistent implementation of District initiatives (SEL, curriculum, mental health) • Leadership turnover

• Dedication from admin to promote inclusivity and combat hate speech	• Infrastructure

TABLE 8

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
• Diverse Community • PD opportunities/choices for Staff • Restorative Practices for Students & Staff • Technology and Foundation to collect data from students on new ELA and math curriculums • New SOPs for administrative/district wide systems • Great teachers at all schools • District has improved communication and is trying to be more transparent (we have very opinionated stakeholders which can be challenging at times) • High school course selection • Warm welcoming elementary schools • Improvement of the buildings/infrastructure (mostly as	• Staff Retention/ Budget Cuts- New Contract 2027 • Supporting Teachers with Students (Climate & Cultural in middle school needs support for chronic absenteeism / tardiness and also discipline processes) • Balancing Tech with curriculum • LGBQT students to feel more supported - proactive district protocols • Curriculum Mapping/ Feedback from Teachers (Formal to district) • Operations Systems - alignment across buildings (vertical articulation) • Budget constraints / district being creative and problem solving to save money • Transportation is a big cost,

a result of Long-Range Facility Plan)	and we need to learn how to streamline costs • The two towns have financial challenges which impacts taxpayer sentiment when taxes are raised by school district (inflation) • District needs to develop new revenue streams creatively

SUMMARY – Top 5 Common Threads

Each group reported out to the large group their list of strengths and challenges. The group identified and discussed common threads. The following common themes appear below.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES
1. Strong commitment to equity and inclusion 2. Robust community engagement and partnerships 3. Talented and dedicated staff 4. Diverse student population 5. Existing academic and extracurricular programs	1. Inconsistent communication and transparency 2. Achievement gaps and uneven student outcomes 3. Facility and infrastructure concerns 4. Need for greater staff support and professional development 5. Social-emotional and behavioral needs of students

APPENDIX C

Meeting 2 Outcomes

Vision 2031



South Orange – Maplewood School District

Strategic Planning Meeting #2 Outcomes Report

April 15, 2026

Mission Statement

The South Orange & Maplewood School District's mission is to awaken potential by inspiring students to imagine boldly, pursue their passions with purpose, and work together to create a brighter future. We do this by cultivating a learner-centered environment, opening multiple pathways to success, and reimagining the structures, systems, and supports that shape learning. Through innovative teaching, genuine partnership with families, and the collective wisdom of our community, we prepare our students not only to thrive but to lead, create, and transform the world they inherit.

What are the Visions of the South Orange - Maplewood School District?

On April 15, 2026, South Orange - Maplewood District administrators, staff, parents/guardians, and community members, twenty-five (25) in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The topic for the second meeting was focused on developing a vision and initiatives toward achieving that vision, for the South Orange - Maplewood School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Superintendent Bing. Facilitator Jeanne Cleary, from the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), was introduced and provided an overview of the strategic planning process and the focus for the evening's activity.

We reviewed the consensus process utilized in strategic planning. The topic for the evening focused on creating a shared vision for the South Orange - Maplewood School District. We were asked to imagine – what if, in five years' time, at the maturation of the strategic plan we are creating, South Orange - Maplewood School District had become a nationally recognized school district for providing educational excellence for its

students? What if the national media was writing about the district so public-school districts nationwide could emulate what happens here?

Participants gathered in randomly assigned groups, four (4) groups in total, to develop a shared vision and initiatives. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points and presented those to the full group of meeting participants. The group then identified the four (4) Goal Areas which will be the focus of Meeting #3.

Group Consensus: Vision & Initiatives

Group 1	
Title	**"SOMSD is 100 for 100! "Where all teachers and students get what they need to thrive."**
Vision	Teachers express confidence in diverse pedagogy to meet all student needs. Students express feeling engaged and challenged in their own development and education. Students and staff are proud that their well-maintained facilities are conducive to a flexible and motivating learning environment. SOMSD programs are inquiry based, student-centered, and provide experience for any field they wish to pursue. All students and staff feel safe to practice their durable and soft skills progressively from Kindergarten through 12th grade. They feel confident in their adaptability, resilience, and collaboration. There is a consistent and thoughtful partnership between parents, students, staff, community, administrations, and schools. Students graduate with a healthy and productive relationship with technology.
Initiatives	▪ Facility Maintenance & Financial Stability ▪ College, Life & Career Readiness ▪ Supporting SEL, Neurodiversity & Student First (Whole Child) ▪ Curriculum & Teaching ▪ Community, Culture & Collaboration

Group 2

Title / Vision **"District Achieves 100% Graduation Rate with Highest Student Satisfaction Rate in the Nation"**

Initiatives

- Robust programs for differentiating for the whole child.
- District-wide professional development focused on belonging/seeing and supporting the whole child academically,
- social/emotionally, culturally.
- Teachers collaborate to engage in innovative instructional methods and embody high expectations for each student, regardless of predictive data.
- High quality data analysis informs decision-making.
- Systems for meaningful community engagement from
- parents, local organizations, town and district resources.
- State-of-the-art facilities.

Group 3

Title / Vision **"Community. Collaboration. Communication. Commitment. South Orange-Maplewood School District Brings Support to All Students, Increasing Graduation Rates of all Students."**

Initiatives

- Consistent meetings between grade levels, subject specific and cross-subject and cross-town buildings monthly.
- On-going, intentional education for staff and administrators on neurodiversity.
- Empowering master teachers to turn-key and provide education and support to staff on a topic they are experts in. This will be supported and encouraged by admin.
- Scope and sequence, vertical-articulation, clear expectations and communication between educators and community.
- Maintain consistency in curriculum.
- Early intervention services in the elementary grades to support opportunity gaps and provide support for any academic needs.
- Neuro-affirming, child-centered (human-centered).
- Providing a safe space for all staff and students to thrive.

Groups 4 - 5 Were combined with other groups.

Group 6

Title

"SOMSD Shines by Developing Society-Ready Students Through Nimble and Responsive Curriculum, Efficient Use of Resources, and Widespread Community Support."

Vision

Society-ready citizens.
Financial stability & reduction of deferred maintenance.
Equitable access.
Widespread community support.
Welcoming spaces - (infrastructure and people) everyone wants to be there!
Tech preparedness but not reliance.

Initiatives

- Personalized pathways, college and vocational; ethics/philosophy as core of curriculum.
- Retain teachers; move programs in house; reduce outsourcing; Identify and address critical infrastructure project.
- Universal pre-k.

Groups 7 -10 Were combined with other groups.



Common Themes

Following the small groups reporting out to the full group, four (4) broad goal areas were identified and agreed to through a consensus model by the attendees:

1. A strong and sustainable infrastructure for our schools.
2. Equitable access to learning.
3. Pathways to success – college, society and career readiness.
4. Active partnerships among all stakeholders – students, staff, parents, administration and community.

APPENDIX D

Meeting 3 Outcomes
Strategic Planning Goal Setting – Goals and Objectives

South Orange – Maplewood School District

Strategic Planning Meeting #3 Outcomes Report

May 11, 2026

Mission Statement

The South Orange & Maplewood School District's mission is to awaken potential by inspiring students to imagine boldly, pursue their passions with purpose, and work together to create a brighter future. We do this by cultivating a learner-centered environment, opening multiple pathways to success, and reimagining the structures, systems, and supports that shape learning. Through innovative teaching, genuine partnership with families, and the collective wisdom of our community, we prepare our students not only to thrive but to lead, create, and transform the world they inherit.

Meeting# 3
Developing Strategic Planning Goals & Objectives

On May 11, 2026, the South Orange & Maplewood School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, students, and community members thirty-six (36) in all came together for Meeting #3 of the Strategic Planning process. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Mr. Jason Bing, Superintendent. NJSBA Facilitator Jeanne Cleary provided an overview of the strategic planning process and the focus for the evening's activity.

The topic for the third meeting focused on developing goal statements and objectives for each of the four (4) goal areas identified at the second meeting. Participants gathered in self-selected groups to work on the goal area of their choice. There were four (4) tables, one for each goal area.

Each group was asked to identify a recorder to enter their consensus points, and a spokesperson who would report their work to the larger group. Each goal area group reviewed the outcomes from Meeting #1 - Strengths & Challenges, and Meeting #2 - Vision and Initiatives, to identify areas of focus, develop objectives, and then develop an overarching goal statement for their goal area. Each group reported their work to the larger group.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the goal area groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district website to share this work with the community.

Strategic Planning Goals & Objectives

GOAL AREA #1: INFRASTRUCTURE – Strong & Sustainable Infrastructure

Goal Statement: Create a culture of financial sustainability through strong leadership and community investment that supports teaching and learning.

Objectives:

- Identify low-cost and high-impact ways to improve school community spaces
- Strategic expansion of philanthropic avenues to support district initiatives
- Use facilities creatively as a source for additional revenue
- Continue to build transparency with the community and create strategic opportunities for involvement and feedback

GOAL AREA #2: ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS – Among Students, Staff, Parents, Administration & Community

Goal Statement: To implement a fluid exchange of communication among community members to encourage productive collaboration, proactive solutions, and to ensure accurate information sharing, so that community members may make informed decisions and trust may be built.

Objectives:

- Implementing accessible feedback mechanisms for community engagement
- Ensuring easy access to current, relevant, and factual information
- Publicizing changes to all relevant community members through targeted outreach
- Keeping staff and teachers informed of administrative changes and ensuring they have a seat at the table

GOAL AREA #3: ACCESS – Equitable Access to Learning

Goal Statement: Use the data available to develop and evaluate strategies that close the academic achievement gap and increase the learning opportunities for our most vulnerable students (students of color, neurodiverse students, ML students).

Objectives:

- Ensure all students understand the path to high school graduation, and the path to higher level courses.
- Build tutoring program (Achieve/Slam lab) where students do not feel stigmatized for seeking help, and tutor students understand the benefits to themselves of providing tutoring (volunteer hours etc.)
- Evaluate and address teacher biases with a view to building a culture of success through professional development, where every adult wants every student to fulfill their potential, and every student understands what success looks like for them and wants to achieve it.
- Ensure the action items from the Rutgers Recommendations are ongoing and help to maintain a baseline for the access and equity needed for Black students.
- Give students a way to request help/provide feedback on teachers/schedules etc. online.
- Build on success of Freshman Academy, expanding to middle schools and higher grades.

GOAL AREA #4: PATHWAYS to SUCCESS – College, Society & Career Readiness

Goal Statement: Through holistically supporting students throughout their educational career, and with an eye toward overcoming opportunity gaps, our students will leave high school feeling meaningfully connected to their community and prepared and supported both for higher education and their personal post-high school goals and pursuits.

- Every student by graduation is provided the support of at least one trusted adult to guide them through educational journey.
- Designed advisory, mentorship, and guidance-engagement opportunities are provided that more organically meet students where they are and incentivize participation, including through community involvement.



- Opportunities and space are made available for students to identify their interests, with paths of instruction provided to grow those skills and knowledge, in addition to core instructional pursuits.



APPENDIX E
Action Plans



SOUTH ORANGE & MAPLEWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT (SOMSD)

COMPREHENSIVE 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2026–2031)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Orange & Maplewood School District (SOMSD) 5-Year Strategic Plan (2026–2031) establishes a coherent, evidence-based operational roadmap to ignite the extraordinary potential within every student. Designed through multi-stakeholder collaboration with administrators, Board of Education members, staff, students, families, and community partners, this plan unifies key district frameworks—including Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), and Visible Learning—into actionable operational structures.

The plan is organized around four strategic priorities: I. Sustainable Infrastructure & Operations; II. Active Partnerships (Home, School & Community); III. Equitable Access to Learning & Academic Growth; and IV. Wellness-Focused Environment & Digital Balance. Section 2 defines each priority and its goal. Sections 3 and 4 sequence implementation by year and quarter. Section 5 identifies how progress will be monitored. Section 6 translates the same four priorities and goal statements into objectives, resources, timelines, and indicators of success. College and career readiness is part of Priority III; student belonging and trusted adult connections are part of Priority IV.

Mission Statement: The South Orange & Maplewood School District's mission is to awaken potential by inspiring students to imagine boldly, pursue their passions with purpose, and work together to create a brighter future. We do this by cultivating a learner-centered environment, opening multiple pathways to success, and reimagining the structures, systems, and supports that shape learning. Through innovative teaching, genuine partnership with families, and the

collective wisdom of our community, we prepare our students not only to thrive but to lead, create, and transform the world they inherit.

Vision Statement: We envision a thriving educational community where students take ownership of their learning journey, educators leverage proven, evidence-based interventions, and every individual's unique strengths are celebrated within a safe, nurturing, and equitable environment designed for sustainable growth.

Portrait of a Graduate

The School District of
SOUTH ORANGE & MAPLEWOOD
525 Academy Street • Maplewood, NJ 07040



SOMSD Indicators

- Social Justice and Inclusion
- Perseverance
- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving
- Global Citizen

COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL
excelsior
FOUNDED 1885

2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & CORE GOAL AREAS

The following four priorities and goal statements guide the entire plan. They are repeated in Section 6, where the district identifies the actions and indicators that will advance each goal.

Priority I: Sustainable Infrastructure & Operations

Goal Statement: Create a culture of financial sustainability through strong leadership and community investment that supports teaching and learning.

- **Identify low-cost and high-impact ways to improve school community spaces:** Execute baseline facility audits, prioritize critical infrastructure repairs—focusing on secured safety entryways, auditoriums, structural floors, ceilings, and modernized restrooms—and secure funding by blending traditional capital bonds with innovative public-private partnerships and energy-efficiency grants.
- **Strategic expansion of innovative revenue generators:** Deploy dedicated grant writing platforms, and expand corporate and alumni donor pipelines to build a sustainable, long-term philanthropic revenue stream. Modernize rental policies and launch an online facility booking portal to increase non-tax revenue reinvested into instructional programs.
- **Transparency & Community Involvement:** Promote district-wide fiscal transparency by hosting quarterly financial town halls, publishing comprehensive annual financial reports, and maintaining an interactive, real-time budget dashboard that gives community members clear insight into resource allocation and expenditure.
- **Technology Plan:** create a technology plan to maintain, standardize, and implement instructional technologies that are aligned to defined educational goals and curated with teaching and learning, student wellness, and fiscal responsibility as the primary considerations.
- **Operational Practices:** Define operational practices for all departments within the district with clearly articulated goals and actions each year that leads towards higher automation and increased efficiencies with a focus on maintaining fully staffed schools with highly qualified/certified personnel.

Priority II: Active Partnerships (Home, School & Community)

Goal Statement: Implement a fluid exchange of communication among community members to encourage productive collaboration, proactive solutions, and accurate information sharing to build lasting trust.

- **Accessible feedback mechanisms:** Promote agile, community-centered governance by deploying multi-lingual engagement tools and a unified district mobile app, backed by

monthly listening sessions and a guaranteed 48-hour response workflow that ensures every voice is heard and addressed in real time.

Centralized factual information hub: Proactively counter misinformation and safeguard district trust by deploying a redesigned, mobile-optimized website as a centralized truth source, issuing bi-weekly digital newsletters, and leveraging targeted multi-channel outreach to deliver timely, accurate information directly to families and the community leveraging social media platforms.

Staff & Educator Inclusion: Establish quarterly and informal Coffee with Superintendent/SLT, establish quarterly Superintendent Student Cabinet, and maintain joint labor-management committees.

Priority III: Equitable Access to Learning & Academic Growth

Goal Statement: Leverage data systems to close achievement gaps and expand learning opportunities for vulnerable student populations (BIPOC, neurodivergent, ML students) through holistically supporting students throughout their educational career to bridge opportunity gaps and prepare graduates for post-secondary pursuits.

Graduation & Advanced Course Pathways: Expand student access to high-wage, high-demand careers and close the equity gap in advanced coursework, the *Diploma Plus Pathways model* integrates student interests with structural access mechanisms such as work based learning and industry certifications. This plan shifts career exploration from passive advising to active student choice while systematically removing structural barriers to Advanced Placement (AP), Dual enrollment and Honors courses for historically underrepresented demographics.

Non-Stigmatized Peer Tutoring: scale student achievement by transforming traditional tutoring into a structured, ecosystem-driven model. By establishing dedicated learning centers (Achieve and Slam Lab), leveraging trained peer coaches, and implementing credit incentives, schools ensure consistent academic intervention without stigmatizing support.

Culturally Responsive & Anti-Bias PD and Monitoring: Transform classroom practice and close structural achievement gaps by delivering continuous professional development in Implicit Bias, Visible Learning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), operationalized through Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles of administrator -led instructional rounds.

Rutgers Recommendations: Sustain effective oversight requires transitioning the Equity Task Force from an ad-hoc advisory group into an institutionalized governing body. This framework establishes continuous oversight, data-driven progress audits, and institutional accountability to preserve academic and systemic baselines for Black students.

Freshman & Middle School Transitions: Extend the Freshman Academy model and the Rigor, Relevance, and Resilience (R^3) framework to middle school grades by establishing

interdisciplinary team pods, embedding daily executive functioning instruction, and implementing authentic, project-based learning to eliminate skill gaps and elevate academic rigor.

Priority IV: Wellness-Focused Environment & Digital Balance

Goal Statement: Prioritize physical, social, and emotional wellness by balancing technology usage, deepening multi-tiered supports, and fostering an inclusive culture.

- **Digital Wellness & "De-Teching":** Protect student mental health and foster distraction-free learning environments by implementing phone-free school policies and systematically reducing daily screen-time reliance across middle and high school classrooms.
- **Family Wellness Academies:** Promote holistic student and family well-being through collaborative partnerships with local healthcare, mental health, and community organizations to host monthly interactive parent workshops focused on digital safety, youth mental health, and positive parenting practices.
- **Social Emotional Learning:** Convene and grow inter-agency partnerships to streamline wrap-around mental health and social support services to reduce gaps between community agencies and school district. Ensure all teachers and administrators are trained in social emotional learning and tiered interventions

3. YEARLY IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP (2026–2031)

Year 1: Build the Foundation (2026–2027)

- Complete district facility/ADA audits and submit BOSE Capital Bond proposals.
- Roll out bell-to-bell phone-free learning guidelines and launch Executive Functioning curricula.
- Expand District Children's Cabinet and convene monthly Family Wellness Academies.
- Standardize disaggregated data monitoring across IXL, i-Ready, and LinkIt benchmark platforms.
- Develop AI standard operating procedures.
- Deploy online financial dashboard.
- Host Financial Town Halls.
- Transition to new Personnel management and evaluation platform.
- Departmental SOPs.
- Update district regulations.
- Launch Instructional Rounds protocol and process.
- Develop a communication plan matrix for district and schools.
- Facilitate professional development around Visible learning for administrators.
- Implement phone free policy K-12.
- Eliminate student access to youtube K-8.
- Implement Chromebook Parental control feature grades 6-12.

Curate list of instructional internet sites aligning to curriculum/instruction.

Year 2: Expand & Implement (2027–2028)

Formalize grant-making pipelines.
Launch an online payment portal.
Expand peer-led tutoring programs (Achieve/Slam Lab) and Freshman Transition models/RRR in CHS and middle schools.
Incorporate Special Education systems-performance tracking for IEP timeline compliance.
Develop a 5 year technology plan.
Expand Diploma Plus pathways (Dual Enrollment,Career, Civics Seal).
Increase underserved populations participation in AP Seminar.
Transition to a new online business platform (Budget/Payroll, et al).
Develop district mobile APP.

Year 3: Deepen & Scale (2028–2029)

Achieve 100% staff completion of implicit bias and UDL professional development.
Expand Work-Based Learning (WBL) and business partnership networks.
Develop exemplary Project Based Learning units for secondary level.

Year 4: Institutionalize & Refine (2029–2030)

Scale transition academy models into middle school buildings.
Establish new CTE industry-recognized certification tracks.
Evaluate long-term ROI of multi-tiered academic and SEL intervention tools.

Year 5: Sustain & Evaluate (2030–2031)

Publish 5-Year Comprehensive Impact Report on academic growth, climate metrics, and fiscal reserves.
Achieve targeted 25% narrowing of the achievement gap across standardized metrics.
Re-convene community strategic planning assemblies for 2031–2036 cycle.

4. YEAR 1 QUARTERLY EXECUTION MATRIX (2026–2027)

Quarter	Major Action Steps	Responsible Leads	Key Milestones / Output
Q1: Fall 2026 (Jul–Oct)	• Launch Phone-Free Learning Policy. • Complete Facilities audit. • Expand District Children's Cabinet.	• Superintendent & SLT • Building Principals • Facilities Director • Director of C&I	• Cabinet growth. • Baseline facility costs logged. • 40% drop in phone distraction referrals.

Quarter	Major Action Steps	Responsible Leads	Key Milestones / Output
	• Administer universal math screeners.		•Implement phone free policy K-12. •Eliminate student access to youtube K-8. •Implement Chromebook Parental control feature grades 6-12. • Visible learning professional development.
Q2: Winter 2026 (Nov–Jan)	• Convene Family Wellness Academies. • Execute non-evaluative Instructional Rounds. • Disaggregate mid-year IXL & i-Ready data. • Complete internal QSAC facility review.	• Asst. Supt. Curriculum • Equity Officer • Business Admin • Supervisor of Guidance	• 250+ parent participants. • Mid-year benchmark progress logged. • QSAC gap analysis complete. • Publish online finance dashboard.
Q3: Spring 2027 (Feb–Apr)	• Conduct community BOSE bond town halls. • Review Tier 2/3 MTSS interventions. • Evaluate special education IEP timelines. • Audit community rental policy.	• Business Admin • Director Special Services • MTSS Coordinators	• BOSE Bond proposal submitted. • IEP timeline compliance audit. •Publish mental health and services directory. •New personnel/Evaluation platform launched. • Curate list of instructional internet sites aligning to curriculum/instruction.
Q4: Summer 2027 (May–Jun)	• Finalize EOY student growth evaluations. • Publish annual financial stewardship report. • Present Year 1 outcome dashboard to Board.	• Superintendent • Board of Education • SLT Team	• EOY academic report published. • Year 1 KPI targets reviewed publicly. • Publish district regulations. • Publish AI SOP.

5. GOVERNANCE & METRICS MONITORING DASHBOARD

The District Leadership Team and Board of Education monitor the same four priorities defined in Section 2 and implemented in Section 6. The dashboard below groups outcome measures by their primary strategic priority. Related indicators in Section 6 provide additional implementation evidence. Academic achievement, equity, and college and career readiness are monitored together under Priority III; belonging and trusted adult connections are monitored under Priority IV.

Governance Cadence:

Monthly SLT Review: 1st administrative meeting of each month dedicated to operational tracking.

Quarterly Board Dashboards: Public progress reporting categorized as On Track, Needs Support, or Completed.

Annual Public Progress Report: Formal summer presentation summarizing strategic accomplishments and financial stewardship.

Core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Strategic Priority	Baseline Metric / Target	Measurement Source
Priority I: Sustainable Infrastructure & Operations	• 15% Y-o-Y growth in facility rental revenue. • 20% increase in philanthropic grant funding. • $2M annual addition to fund balance.*	• Board Secretary & Treasurer Reports • Audited Financial Statements
Priority II: Active Partnerships (Home, School & Community)	• 48-hour response workflow for community inquiries. • 80% reach on update notifications. • Increased information accessibility and staff survey participation.	• Community inquiry response logs • Notification receipt analytics • Website analytics and annual surveys
Priority III: Equitable Access to Learning & Academic Growth — Academic Achievement	• 80%+ of Gr 3–8 achieve SmartScore 80+ in IXL Math. • 60%+ K–8 meet i-Ready ELA typical growth. • 75%+ Gr 4–8 proficient on C-E-R benchmarks.	• IXL Analytics Dashboard • i-Ready Diagnostic Data • LinkIt Benchmark Assessments

Strategic Priority	Baseline Metric / Target	Measurement Source
Priority III: Equitable Access to Learning & Academic Growth — Equity & Pathways	• 20% increase in AP/Honors enrollment for Black/ML students. • 25% gap reduction on NJSLA standardized assessments.	• District Student Information System • NJSLA Disaggregated Reports
Priority IV: Wellness-Focused Environment & Digital Balance	• 40% reduction in classroom tech distraction referrals. • 80% of graduating seniors reporting 1+ trusted adult. • 75%+ positive parent climate satisfaction.	• PowerSchool Discipline Logs • Senior Exit Surveys • Annual District Climate Survey

6. STRATEGIC PRIORITY IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

This roadmap implements the four strategic priorities defined in Section 2. The priority names and goal statements are the same in both sections. The objectives below specify the work, resources, timelines, and indicators of success; they do not establish a separate set of district goals.

Priority I: Sustainable Infrastructure & Operations

Goal Statement: Create a culture of financial sustainability through strong leadership and community investment that supports teaching and learning.

Objectives & Action Plan

Identify low-cost and high-impact ways to improve school community spaces

Resources to be Deployed: Facilities operations budget, Capital bond, local business and government partnerships.

Due Date: June 2027

Indicators of Success: Completion of facility audits. Completed bond proposal/presentation.

Strategic expansion of philanthropic avenues to support district initiatives

Resources to be Deployed: Dedicated grant writing team, Education Foundation partnership, donor database software exploration.

Due Date: December 2028

Indicators of Success: 25% increase in philanthropic funding and active alumni grant contributions.

Use facilities creatively as a source for additional revenue

Resources to be Deployed: Electronic payment system, updated rental policy, marketing outreach to community groups.

Due Date: September 2028

Indicators of Success: 15% year-over-year growth in facility rental revenue reinvested into classroom programming.

Continue to build transparency with the community and create strategic opportunities for involvement and feedback

Resources to be Deployed: Quarterly financial town halls, budget dashboard, development of a communications team.

Due Date: June 2027

Indicators of Success: Publication of annual financial reports; sustained community participation in town hall sessions.

Develop a technology plan aligned with teaching, learning, student wellness, and fiscal responsibility

Resources to be Deployed: District technology staff, curriculum and instruction leaders, instructional technology inventory, and budget planning processes.

Due Date: June 2028, consistent with the Year 2 roadmap.

Indicators of Success: Completion of a five-year technology plan addressing maintenance, standardization, instructional alignment, and responsible technology use.

Define departmental operational practices and improve administrative systems

Resources to be Deployed: Department leaders, personnel and evaluation platform, business systems, and departmental standard operating procedures.

Due Date: June 2027 for departmental procedures and personnel/evaluation systems; June 2028 for the business platform transition.

Indicators of Success: Documented departmental procedures and annual goals; implementation of the personnel/evaluation and business platforms; annual review of staffing and operational efficiencies.

Priority II: Active Partnerships (Home, School & Community)

Goal Statement: Implement a fluid exchange of communication among community members to encourage productive collaboration, proactive solutions, and accurate information sharing to build lasting trust.

Objectives & Action Plan

Implementing accessible feedback mechanisms for community engagement

Resources to be Deployed: Multi-lingual online surveys, monthly listening sessions.

Due Date: June 2028

Indicators of Success: Establishment of a feedback loop system with guaranteed 48-hour response times for community inquiries.

Ensuring easy access to current, relevant, and factual information

Resources to be Deployed: Redesigned with mobile optimized district website, bi-weekly digital newsletter, social media channels.

Due Date: March 2027

Indicators of Success: Increased web traffic analytics and positive feedback on information accessibility in annual surveys.

Publicizing changes to all relevant community members through targeted outreach

Resources to be Deployed: Targeted SMS messaging tools, liaison partnerships with local civic groups, District mobile app.

Due Date: Ongoing through June 2031

Indicators of Success: 80% reach on update notifications confirmed via receipt tracking analytics.

Keeping staff and teachers informed of administrative changes and ensuring they have a seat at the table

Resources to be Deployed: Quarterly and informal Coffee with Superintendent/SLT, establish quarterly Superintendent Student Cabinet, joint labor-management committees.

Due Date: September 2027

Indicators of Success: Communication avenues to Superintendent; improved staff survey participation.

Priority III: Equitable Access to Learning & Academic Growth

Goal Statement: Leverage data systems to close achievement gaps and expand learning opportunities for vulnerable student populations (BIPOC, neurodivergent, ML students) through holistically supporting students throughout their educational career to bridge opportunity gaps and prepare graduates for post-secondary pursuits.

Objectives & Action Plan

Ensure all students understand the path to high school graduation and higher level courses

Resources to be Deployed: Individualized academic pathway platform, bilingual counseling staff/technology, student orientation modules.

Due Date: June 2028

Indicators of Success: 20% increase in advanced course enrollment among underrepresented student groups.

Build a tutoring program (Achieve/Slam lab) where students feel supported seeking help

Resources to be Deployed: Peer tutoring coordinators, dedicated learning spaces, community service credit incentives.

Due Date: January 2028

Indicators of Success: Doubling of student participation rate in peer high impact tutoring; measurable improvements in course pass rates.

Evaluate and address teacher biases through targeted professional development

Resources to be Deployed: DEI facilitators, professional development days, implicit bias training curriculum modules.

Due Date: June 2029

Indicators of Success: 100% staff completion of bias training; reduction in disciplinary referral disparities.

Strengthen Tier 1 instruction and monitor academic growth through shared data and instructional rounds

Resources to be Deployed: Curriculum supervisors, administrator professional development in Visible Learning, UDL, and culturally responsive teaching; instructional rounds; IXL, i-Ready, and LinkIt data.

Due Date: Launch in 2026–2027; ongoing review through June 2031.

Indicators of Success: Implementation of non-evaluative instructional rounds and disaggregated data reviews; progress toward the academic achievement and equity targets in Section 5.

Ensure ongoing action items from the Rutgers Recommendations to maintain access and equity for Black students

Resources to be Deployed: Equity task force oversight, annual progress audits, targeted academic support funds.

Due Date: Ongoing through June 2031

Indicators of Success: Full implementation of all recommendations; observable narrowing of the achievement gap in standardized metrics.

Give students a way to request help and provide feedback online

Resources to be Deployed: District app, guidance department response workflow, IT support.

Due Date: September 2027

Indicators of Success: Launch of app with over 80% student awareness and usage for support requests.

Build on the success of Freshman Academy/RRR, expanding to middle schools and higher grades

Resources to be Deployed: Grade-level team leaders, interdisciplinary curriculum planning time, transition coaches.

Due Date: Ongoing June 2030

Indicators of Success: Successful rollout across middle schools (RRR); improved 9th-grade transition and retention metrics.

Design advisory, mentorship, and guidance-engagement opportunities that meet students where they are

Resources to be Deployed: Community mentorship network, local business partnerships, career exploration workshops.

Due Date: December 2028

Indicators of Success: Over 50% student participation in voluntary mentorship and career exploration opportunities.

Provide opportunities and space for students to identify their interests and build specialized skills

Resources to be Deployed: Vocational/technical learning labs (onsite or offsite), Work based learning coordinator, elective course redesign budget.

Due Date: Ongoing June 2030

Indicators of Success: Establishment of new career CTE certification tracks; expansion of dual enrollment opportunities and high post-secondary placement rate.

Priority IV: Wellness-Focused Environment & Digital Balance

Goal Statement: Prioritize physical, social, and emotional wellness by balancing technology usage, deepening multi-tiered supports, and fostering an inclusive culture.

Objectives & Action Plan

Provide every student with the support of at least one trusted adult guide through graduation

Resources to be Deployed: Staff mentorship training, advisory period scheduling, student-advisor matching tool.

Due Date: June 2028

Indicators of Success: 80% of graduating seniors reporting at least one trusted staff connection on exit surveys.

Promote digital wellness and reduce technology-related distractions

Resources to be Deployed: Building principals, district technology staff, phone-free learning policy, Chromebook parental controls, and curated instructional internet resources.

Due Date: June 2027 for Year 1 implementation; ongoing monitoring through June 2031.

Indicators of Success: Implementation of the K–12 phone-free policy and Year 1 digital safeguards; 40% reduction in classroom technology distraction referrals, as monitored in Section 5.

Convene Family Wellness Academies and strengthen family access to support services

Resources to be Deployed: District Children's Cabinet; local healthcare, mental health, and community partners; parent workshops; mental health and services directory.

Due Date: Launch in 2026–2027; monthly workshops and ongoing partnerships through June 2031.

Indicators of Success: Monthly Family Wellness Academies; 250+ parent participants in the Year 1 winter milestone; publication of the mental health and services directory; progress toward the 75% positive parent climate satisfaction target in Section 5.

Strengthen social emotional learning and multi-tiered wellness supports

Resources to be Deployed: Teachers, administrators, guidance and mental health staff, SEL professional development, tiered interventions, and inter-agency partnerships.

Due Date: Ongoing through June 2031; review intervention effectiveness in 2029–2030, consistent with the Year 4 roadmap.

Indicators of Success: Staff training in SEL and tiered interventions; review of wrap-around service access and intervention effectiveness; progress on student connection and climate measures in Section 5.