



3D Strategic Planning

“Determination, Dream and Destiny by Design”

MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 29, 2024 - Meeting #2 - Outcomes

Mission Statement

The Mountainside Public School District is committed to academic excellence and providing an equitable, whole-child education for all K-8 students to ensure they are well-prepared for high school, and empowered with the knowledge, literacy, and social and emotional skills needed to be lifelong learners and shape the world around them. The District promotes a collaborative and supportive learning environment, infusing a comprehensive curriculum with 21st century skills that encourage communication and innovative, creative and critical thinking. It is our goal that all our students become informed, empathetic and productive citizens who are responsible on a personal, community and global level. The Board of Education, administration, and staff, working together with students, parents and the community, are accountable for achieving this vision.

What Are Our Visions for the Mountainside School District?

On April 30, 2024, Mountainside School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, and community members came together for the second strategic planning meeting. The topic for the second meeting was focused on developing a vision and initiatives toward achieving that vision, for the Mountainside School District. Mrs. Janet Walling and Board President, Vivian Pupo introduced facilitators Patti Rees and Jeanne Cleary, from the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), who 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 Mountainside School District. We were then asked to imagine — what if, in five years’ time, at the maturation of the strategic plan we are creating, Mountainside Public Schools had become a nationally recognized school district for providing an outstanding education for its students? What if the national media was writing about the Mountainside so public-school districts nationwide could emulate what happens *here*?

Participants gathered in randomly assigned groups, five groups in total, to develop a shared vision and initiatives. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points and presented those to the larger group.



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 website to share the group work during the strategic planning process.

GROUP 1	
Title	Mountainside Achieves Cooperative Model of Education by going back to basics
Vision Statement(s)	Leverage the best of the past and the best of the present to build for the future Mountainside Goes Back to Basics with Cooperative Partnerships
Initiatives	Less Focus on Technology, more focus on basic life skills Partnership of school and home Build on CARES for character development Parent Education Initiatives – bimonthly focus/topic in classroom/workshop – modeled after career days – Share Your Passion Community / Committee involvement in funding strategies Before and After school enrichment from parents Leverage our own student population Discovery Zone for developmental learning (maybe as a Special) Introduce at Back to School Night Meet people where they are at – get more parents involved who may want to get involved but don’t know how – more awareness More awareness of budget constraints
GROUP 2	
Title	Mountainside Ranks in Top Five K-8 School in NJ
Vision Statement(s)	We believe in creating a collaborative community that promotes respect, intelligence by leveraging the resources and capabilities of our small town and its members.
Initiatives	Developing special education programs that draw students regionally Providing relevant high quality professional development Supportive culture to maintain staff retention Developing Special Education programs to keep more students in district and to address more specific needs Create a multicultural celebration
GROUP 3	
Title	Mountainside Masters the Balance between Social Media and Social Interactions
Vision Statement(s)	Balance technology and social skills to create confident, competent, and compassionate students.
Initiatives	Peer leaders program - “Building bridges.” The middle school students work with the primary and elementary students. After school activities, but student run Volunteer program (Requirement?) - connect to community programs, bring in seniors. After school. Senior outreach. Intergenerational study – history. Intergenerational book study (Social Studies, English) Parent pact to stay off cell phones and social media – Wait until 8 th Pledge



GROUP 4

TITLE	AI can't compost! Mountainside seeks recognition by White House as Global Gold Star District for sparking nationwide trend toward school-waste composting, saving states billions and improving education to unlock new fields of science- and energy-centric career opportunities.
Vision Statement	<p>Mountainside Public School District is committed to inspiring children to embrace a lifelong commitment to our environment and country through a world-class, first-of-its-kind school-wide composting program. This science- and tech-focused curriculum-based initiative introduces our youngest minds to science through hands-on experience composting their food waste in school and participating in lectures and local partnership programs with composting companies.</p> <p>Our aim is to create a population of students who thrive with purpose in our ever-changing world. This plan will be built on the foundation of a powerful and collaborative network of community and send-recieve district stakeholders to ensure financial sustainability by diverting food waste, building and maintaining zero energy footprint facilities, and improving our soil and environment.</p> <p>Through educational engagement and collaboration, we aspire to spark a ripple effect of positive change, empowering students to make a tangible difference in creating a more sustainable community that remains the global blueprint for school districts for the coming decades.</p>
Initiative	Global education theme that includes language, cultural competency, etc.
	Composting program starting in Beechwood, spread to Deerfield, District then Union County and State. Mountainside Green Club teachers recognized at national level winning awards. STEM at elementary level learning about lifecycle of food and how it impacts environment and ecology. Saves money, diverts waste, and reduces costs to school and state. Model for the country.
	Gifted and talented. Have program leader and consistency.
	Infrastructure – Energy costs are increasing – energy audit. We need to invest before we save money. Automatic lights, etc. Our own High School. 70-80 per class size, 240 kids at BH now.
	World class communication and collaboration with all community stakeholder groups.

GROUP 5

Title	Global Leaders of Tomorrow - Enriching the Mountainside Curriculum
Vision Statement	To prepare our children to become emerging leaders for tomorrow. Develop active participants to cultivate active learners.
Initiatives	Integrate a curriculum that is educating students of the benefits and harms of technology and social media.
	Hosting cross cultural learning events that reflect personal and family history of various heritage.



Incorporating the Spanish language into the curriculum at a younger grade than currently offered. In Middle School offering more languages for students to choose from.
Sustainability (Environment) by incorporating into the curriculum (STEAM)
Tap into social capital and resources in our community (experts in)

Following each group reporting out on their consensus points, the large group identified the following common themes:

- Balance of technology and social skills
- Working collaboratively with community partners
- Global Awareness
- Creating lifelong learners
- Expanding learning opportunities through multiple means and experiences
- Sustainability
- Staff support and retention

Three goal areas emerged from the common themes identified by the group at large.

1. Parent/Guardian and Community Stakeholder Involvement
2. Expanded Educational Opportunities to Support Student Achievement
3. Partnership and Grants for Sustainability

Our next meeting is set for

Monday, June 3, 2024, at Deerfield School

During the June meeting participants will review the outcomes from Meetings 1 & 2 (strengths & challenges, vision & initiatives) and develop the strategic planning goals and objectives for the School District.

Attendees will have the opportunity to work with any/all the goal areas in which they would like to participate!

Please join us. Bring a friend! Everyone is welcome!

We look forward to seeing you!

Be sure to visit our website soon, www.mountainsideschools.org to review the strategic plan progress.

Thank you for your commitment to Schools!

*Thank
You*

