NORTH SMITHFIELD
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR MISSION IS TO PREPARE EACH STUDENT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL AND RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF SOCIETY.

AUGUST 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic Planning is a process for creating the district's preferred future. It is a long-range planning process for district renewal and transformation for the next 3 to 5 years that:

 ☞ Provides a framework for setting future priorities/pursuits for improvement that are focused on district's, school(s') and students' achievement;
 ☞ Effectively deals with change in a proactive rather than reactive manner by establishing a common purpose, a sense of direction, priorities for change, and a blueprint for action;
 ☞ Helps the district think and act strategically;
 ☞ Clarifies future directions;
 ☞ Establishes priorities;
 ☞ Improves organizational performance; and,
 ☞ Builds teamwork and expertise, and deals effectively with a rapidly changing environment.

The strategic planning process involved a series of steps that moved through:
 1) Assessing organizational capacity to change and improve by:
    ➢ Identifying / understanding the districts strengths and weaknesses[Appendix]; and,
    ➢ Identifying / understanding the districts opportunities and threats
 2) Understanding and applying essential elements of the Rhode Island's Basic Educational Plan {BEP} expectations;
 3) Establishing goals and objectives aligned to the BEP; and,
 4) Reviewing the existing mission statement, vision, and guiding beliefs.

This document presents the strategic plan for the North Smithfield School Department. This strategic plan process was specifically guided by the **Rhode Island Basic Educational Plan** [which identifies district capacities and required functions as it is those measures that are applied to monitor the district's progress.]

Building Capacity for a Cohesive and Aligned System
Implementing an aligned, cohesive system requires a long-term investment in building the capacity of individuals, institutions, and educational communities to develop the knowledge, skills, and resources for effecting sustainable improvement. The presence or absence of capacity-building – from state to district, from district to school, and from school to classroom – is the determinative factor in the success or failure of educational improvement efforts.

The seven functions [research-based] that are well developed in most highly effective school districts and under which most critical district responsibilities fall are:
 1) **Lead the Focus on Learning and Achievement**
 2) **Recruit, Support, and Retain Highly Effective Staff**
 3) **Guide the Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**
 4) **Use Information for Planning and Accountability**
 5) **Engage Families and the Community**
 6) **Foster Safe and Supportive Environments for Students and Staff**
 7) **Ensure Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources**

Although not all of the district's initiatives span all seven functions, it is expected that all school districts should have robust programming across all seven functions.

The **four essential capacities** - within each function above - that require ongoing development at every level of the school system include:
 a) **Leadership –** The capacity to mobilize people to focus and tackle hard issues, thrive, and be accountable for improving the education system - Focused, visionary, accountable leadership;
 b) **Personnel Supports –** The capacity to organize and create responsive, active, and dynamic growth and development mechanisms for improving adult learning and practice - Active, responsive, dynamic Personnel Supports;
 c) **Infrastructure –** The capacity to organize, coordinate, and allocate the necessary resources and information to support a high performing education system - Organized, accessible, transparent Infrastructure;

d) **Content –** The capacity to establish and implement high quality, rigorous, and meaningful learning standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction that leads to student success in college, careers, and life - High quality, rigorous, and authentic Content.

What remains to be completed:
1) Communicating the district's mission, beliefs, and objectives/strategies to all stakeholder groups;
2) Developing and implementing the action plans for each objective;
3) Establishing a monitoring process to renew/revise action plans as necessary; and,
4) Setting a strategic direction to achieve the district's mission, vision and guiding beliefs.

For additional information regarding the Basic Education Plan [BEP] –
- BEP Final Regulations:
  http://www.ride.ri.gov/Regents/Docs/RegentsRegulations/BEP_FINAL_070110.pdf
- BEP Web page:
  http://www.ride.ri.gov/PSI/SupportIntervention/DataWorks/BEP.aspx

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

This Strategic Plan is the culmination of analysis and work by a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, students, School Committee members, business representatives, and community leaders from the North Smithfield community.

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Peg Votta, Parent and Strategic Plan Facilitator

Teresa Bartomioli, Community member, Business Representative, Budget Committee member

Tracy Lafreniere, Teacher, Elementary school

David Mellor, Teacher, High School

Stephen Lindberg, Superintendent of Schools

Kathleen Fagnant, Teacher, Middle School

Clare Arnold, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development

Michael Bartomioli, Community member, Business Representative, past graduate

Jane Franklin, Teacher, Middle School

Avery Peirce, NSHS Student

Carolyn Frayne, Principal, North Smithfield Elementary School

Michelle Taylor, Parent, SELAC Chair

John Lahar, Principal, North Smithfield Middle School

Angela Pugliese, Parent, NSPTO member

Eric Butash, Director of Technology

Amy Devereaux, Parent

Christine Bonas, School Committee member, Parent, Guidance Counselor

Ann Marie Votta, NSHS Student

Christine Charest, Town Council member

Julia Steiny, Guest Speaker

Mission Statement	*Our mission is to prepare each student to be a successful and responsible member of society.*

Guiding Beliefs

We believe:

♦ All students can achieve success through high standards and expectations.

♦ Education is a shared responsibility among students, families, schools, and community.

♦ Mutual respect and social responsibility are fundamental expectations within the educational community.

♦ Effective educational practice is based on inquiry and research.

♦ We have a commitment to reflect, assess, and constantly improve our practice.

♦ Education and learning are life-long endeavors.

♦ Investing in the education of our children benefits the entire community.

Vision Statement	*The North Smithfield School Department, in partnership with the community, meets the educational needs of all students.* ❖ *We provide a safe educational environment which fosters active, challenging learning experiences.* ❖ *We challenge all our students to reach their greatest potential by setting high expectations and providing quality resources, curriculum, and instruction.* *Our success is demonstrated by the achievements of our students and the positive manner in which they productively contribute to our society.*

Goal 1: **Strengthen the engagement and involvement of the community in a meaningful partnership.**

Objectives:
- Infrastructure/ Support: Foster community involvement through collaboration and partnerships among schools, parents, businesses, and the community in a network of support.
- Leadership: Develop and implement a Communication/Outreach Plan.
- Content: Effectively communicate with families and the community concerning learning expectations, student outcomes, and assessment data.

Goal 2: **By the 2016-17 school year, increase Math and Science proficiency to 85%.**

Objectives:
- Infrastructure: Create a system to identify and support students in need of Math intervention.
- Leadership: Develop and implement a plan for integrating Math and Science.
- Content: Align curriculum to the Common Core State Standards / Grade Span Expectations.
- Support: Develop and implement formative and summative assessments aligned to proficiency standards.

Goal #3: **Improve teacher effectiveness.**

Objectives:
- Infrastructure: Expand opportunities for teacher collaboration and reflective practice focusing on improving student proficiency/work products.
- Leadership: Implement research-based K-12 consistent instructional strategies to improve classroom instruction and student achievement.
- Content: Motivate and provide support to all students to reach high expectations in their learning.
- Support: Implement an educator evaluation system focusing on student achievement, reflection, feedback, and continuous professional growth.

Goal #4: **Improve school culture and climate**

Objectives:
- Infrastructure: Develop and implement a consistent approach for promoting healthy social and emotional development that maximizes academic growth.
- Leadership: Establish Core Values / social norms for teachers, students, and parents based on mutual respect.
- Content: Develop and implement a plan to provide opportunities for student leadership and school/community involvement outside the classroom.
- Support: Create safe, supportive, and inviting environments for parents and students.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
8/9/2011

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Leadership	**Leadership**
1. Climate of open mindedness and visibility with school leadership who is open to feedback. 2. Positive relationship and communication with the Town Council. 3. Strong consistent cohesive leadership team/administration 4. Positive functioning School Committee 5. Collaborative leadership. 6. Close knit administrative team.	1. Politicians making decisions based on getting votes. 2. Lack of support from Town departments.- Divisive Culture
Infrastructure	**Infrastructure**
1. Advance in technology and communication improvement. 2. Technology – website. 3. Technology to enhance instruction. 4. Technology as an aid. 5. Facilities management and reorganization. 6. Technology both in instruction and in management.	1. Small capacity within the district. 2. Consistence of technology integration. 3. Fiscal restraints. 4. Marketing and PR about our accomplishments.- Outreach
Content	**Content**
1. Strong curriculum plan and implementation to increase student achievement. 2. Continuity in curriculum. 3. Resourceful & persistent in keeping our focus on student achievement.	1. Mathematics. 2. Need connection between math/science. 3. Math program – student growth. 4. Math achievement. 5. Instruction and opportunities for our gifted and talented students. 6. Science achievement.
Support	**Support**
1. Strong support from parents and families (who participate.) PTO, SELAC, NAC 2. Cooperation from many stakeholders especially including support staff. 3. Good working relationship between school department and NSTA.- share and work with one another. 4. Administrative support. 5. Support from School Committee that knows its role. 6. Committed administrators towards teacher support! 7. Teacher expertise/experience. 8. Excellent teachers. 9. Effective teachers. 10. Stable student population who come to school and remain "ready to learn." (really good kids)	1. Small percentage of teachers that do not foster positive working relationships with parents, students, and other staff. 2. We need to increase parent involvement in meaningful, quality ways. 3. Budget challenges.

OPPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
Leadership	**Leadership**
1. Race To The Top initiative. 2. Change - Management	1. Lack of positive communication… 2. Political influence. 3. Turnover of Town Council – threat to that relationship. 4. Change – managing.
Infrastructure	**Infrastructure**
1. Funding formula. 2. Grant opportunities. 3. Consolidation of municipal services. 4. Use technology to supplement our dwindling resources and increase electives. 5. Common Planning Time 6. Teacher Evaluation System.	1. Technology as a social network. 2. Unfunded mandates. 3. Technology being use as a tool not replacement of teachers. 4. Budget. 5. Dwindling resources.- Increased Class Size; Decrease in Staff/ Supplies
Content	**Content**
1. Common Core of Standards (adoption of.)	1. What we are preparing our students for? Economy? Global Marketing? Future Job Markets? 2. Global competition.
Support	**Support**
1. Parents will help but need to know how. 2. Mentor program could be developed with retirement age citizens. 3. Great parents. 4. Expand opportunities for adult learners/offering extra classes. 5. Professional Development. 6. Use the expertise and passion of our existing staff to plan Professional Development that is aligned with our Strategic Plan. 7. Afterschool enhancement opportunities. 8. Increase the safety of our learning environment through the Anti-Bullying Work Group.	1. More than 80% of Townspeople do not have children in school. 2. Media attention (lack of.) 3. Low numbers of parent participation. Parents need to be asked.

Common Terms in Strategic Planning:

A SWOT analysis is a basic, straightforward model that provides direction and serves as a basis for the development of plans. It accomplishes this by assessing an organization's strengths (what an organization can do) and weaknesses (what an organization cannot do) in addition to opportunities (potential favorable conditions for an organization) and threats (potential unfavorable conditions for an organization). The role of SWOT analysis is to take the information from the environmental analysis and separate it into internal issues (strengths and weaknesses) and external issues (opportunities and threats.) Once this is completed, SWOT analysis determines if the information indicates something that will assist the firm in accomplishing its objectives (a strength or opportunity), or if it indicates an obstacle that must be overcome or minimized to achieve desired results (weakness or threat.)

Problem trees describe the main problem, what are causing this problem, and in turn what are causing these problems. It is wrong to assume that if you solve a more immediate problem, everything falls down like a chain of dominoes—i.e., other problems before it are also solved. Any one of these problems identified is multifaceted and if you could work on some aspect of a higher order problem, it does not necessarily mean that all the constraints to action to improve the situation will be solved.

Problem trees focus on problems, rather than opportunities and may appear negative. So for some purposes, you can turn your problem trees into objective trees. You do this be reframing the problem into the desired state after the problem has been solved. You would do this when you want to motivate people about the positive changes that the project wants to bring about. However, objective trees are not as good as problem trees for explaining the logic. Problem trees are good in causality—in identifying what the project is doing and what it needs to do to achieve impact.

Objectives and goals are the ends toward which effort and action are directed or coordinated. Although it is the aim or an end, it is not necessarily the <u>final</u> achievement. That is the mission. Objectives and goals are also *whats*, not *hows*, but they are *smaller* than a mission. There can be a number of objectives and goals to be achieved in order to achieve a mission, but there is usually only *one* mission.

Strategy is *how* to achieve an objective, goal (or even a mission.) It is a thoughtfully constructed plan or method or action that will be employed to achieve the result.

We often talk about people who are good strategists. These are people who excel at devising schemes and plans and courses of action to achieve the desired result.

Strategic Planning

PREPARATORY WORK FOR A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS – INDIVIDUAL

Thinking about our context:

1. What are the challenges and threats facing us as an organization in our external environment? *(External Environment: [Conditions](#), [entities](#), [events](#), and [factors](#) surrounding an [organization](#) that [influence](#) its [activities](#) and [choices](#), and [determine](#) its [opportunities](#) and)*

2. What are the opportunities we should be taking advantage of in the environment in order to:

    a. Make us more sustainable as an organization?
    b. Help us achieve our vision?

3. What information do you think is important to share with others in the strategic planning process?

Thinking about our district:

4. What are the important strengths of our organization?

5. What weaknesses are preventing our organization from achieving its vision?

6. What challenges have we failed to meet in the past two to three years and why have we failed to meet them?

7. What challenges have we met well in the past two to three years and what helped us to meet them?

8. What is the most important outcome that you would like to see emerging from this strategic planning process? Why do you think it is so important?

BEP Performance Measures

	Lead the Focus on Learning and Achievement	Recruit, Support and Retain Highly Effective Staff	Guide the Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Use Information for Planning and Accountability	Engage Families and the Community	Foster Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	Ensure Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources
Leadership	The LEA articulates expectations about the roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders and school improvement and communicates widely that school governance and leadership are distributed and school improvement is a collective responsibility.	The school committee has formalized and negotiated a broad range of strategies to recruit, hire, and retain highly qualified district and school personnel, paying particular attention to staffing low performing schools with highly qualified staff.	The Superintendent has developed and regularly communicates a common vision of effective instruction and ensures that all students have access to guaranteed and viable curricula.	The central office collects, analyzes and uses data to plan instruction, to set instructional priorities, to allocate resources, and to be accountable for student performance and district goals.	The superintendent and school committee actively work together to involve families and the community in promoting student achievement, community-wide leadership, and input on decision-making.	The LEA clearly articulates and facilitates the development, implementation, and maintenance of safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environments where students and staff are respected and engaged in the school community.	The school committee and superintendent identify and acquire high quality resources to support district goals and ensure that budget plans link expenditures to anticipated outcomes.
Content	The LEA establishes policies that create favorable conditions under which learning can take place and performance goals can be measured.	The content—the what—of professional learning reinforces educators' understanding and use of strategies for promotion of equity and high expectations for all students, application of research-based teaching strategies and assessment processes, and involvement of families and other stakeholders in promoting student learning.	The central office and school committee develop and implement an articulated Pre K-12 curriculum for all students that is sequenced and organized to ensure that students know, do, and understand the core content outlined in the GSEs, GLEs, and other state and national standards.	A variety of effective and balanced assessment techniques is routinely and systematically implemented by all instructional personnel as part of a comprehensive district-wide assessment and evaluation system.	The superintendent communicates directly with families and the community concerning learning expectations, student outcomes, and the quality of schools and teachers.	Instruction is personalized and small learning environments maximize student contact with teachers.	The central office coordinates fiscal resources from local, state, and federal funding streams, as well as human resources, to meet priority instructional goals and to promote equity and excellence.
Infrastructure	The district leadership team effectively demonstrates the principles and practices of distributed leadership as part of a process of shared governance.	The central office creates a cohesive system of high quality professional development, including setting priorities, supporting and evaluating district-wide and school-based professional development plans, and providing opportunities for all school personnel to participate.	The central office requires, finances, and supports differentiated instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to ensure that all students have opportunities to meet state and district performance standards.	A cohesive and comprehensive information system is in place to ensure that all staff use data to maximize student outcomes and to monitor result equity, accountability and resource allocation.	The superintendent ensures that opportunities are consistently provided to foster collaboration and partnerships among schools, parents, businesses and the community in a network of support to improve student achievement and school performance.	LEA policies, practices, and procedures foster a sense of community and belonging to ensure that staff and students maximize the academic, social, emotional, and relational growth of each student.	Resources to support student achievement and instructional goals, including money, time, personnel and materials, are allocated in a manner that supports district goals and maximizes student growth and achievement.
Support	All stakeholders within the learning community have achieved consensus regarding their shared sense of vision and mission, which serves as the basis for all facets of the continuous improvement process for both students and staff.	The process—the how—of professional learning is aligned with articulated goals and purposes, is data driven and research based, and evaluated to determine its impact, aligned with adult learning theory, and collaborative in design and implementation.	Teachers engage in a process of collaborative planning for curriculum implementation to ensure that they have a mutual understanding of core content and required student performance(s).	The superintendent provides professional development and ongoing support on interpreting and using data to school staff, members of school improvement teams, and other individuals or groups responsible for measurable results.	The superintendent and central office actively support schools in working effectively with families and the community in promoting student achievement.	The LEA supports school communities of practice for continuous learning for adults, and staff work collaboratively to ensure that policies, policies, and procedures related to sustaining a safe, productive, and inviting learning environment are consistently implemented within each school.	The LEA identifies and acquires high quality resources to support instructional priorities that meet the differentiated needs of staff as identified through a collaborative planning process.

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