



The Great Meadows Regional Public School District Is Creating a New Five-Year Strategic Plan

The 3D Strategic Planning Process: Dream, Determination, and Destiny by Design

Session 1: What Are GMRSD's Strengths, Achievements, and Challenges?

On **Thursday, January 14, 2021**, community members, parents, school district administrators, District staff, and Trustees of the Great Meadows Regional School District Board of Education came together, remotely, in an online meeting to initiate strategic planning. The approximately fifty participants responded in advance to a publicly advertised invitation made on behalf of the GMRSD BOE to staff and the public at-large. The group's charge is to create, over three meetings, a new, five-year plan for the school district. The first evening's work focused on the current strengths of, and challenges facing, the school district of Great Meadows Regional communities it serves.

After greetings and opening remarks by Board President Alison DeMarco, we began the process with an overview of the State of the District by Superintendent of Schools Mr. Michael Mai. Following Superintendent Mai, the purpose of and the methodology for creating a new Strategic Plan were explained to the participants by facilitator and Warren County Field Service Representative Kathleen Helewa of the New Jersey School Boards Association. We then separated into five assigned groups to identify the strengths and points of pride in our district, and to brainstorm what challenges we believe the school district faces currently and in the future. After group discussion, each group identified their "top 10" (or thereabouts) lists of strengths and challenges, which were shared with the entire group of participants.

The information on the following pages is the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all meeting outcomes will be transcribed and made available to the community.



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

Group #1

Strengths	Challenges
Adaptive and flexible staff	The temperature of the schools. The heat of the school in the beginning and end of the year.
Staff has overall general care for the students	We could use more creativity and innovation in the classroom to meet the needs of all students. Implementation Reading and writing Workshop. PBL's Maker space
Community involvement is excellent	We all have this technology, we would like to see it used to the fullest extent
Nurturing environment where kids feel safe to take risks. A strong culture of acceptance and welcoming. Excellent foundation	Supporting teachers and provide adequate PD for teachers
Extracurricular offerings are strong – archery, student council, lots of opportunities	Need to make sure that curriculum need to be in the best interest of the school. Make sure curriculum is grade-level appropriate
Parental interaction for PTO and school functions is very strong	Decreasing enrollment: keep our current funding
Districts commitment to technology: iPads, chromebooks. Strong emphasis on technology integration for our students	Budgetary concerns – if we lose money of the next few years
District Communication: lots of alerts. There is transparency	Gifted and Talented
Location is beautiful – the setting. Right by the police station and fire department	
Both schools are in one location – especially when dropping off kids	

(Continues on the following page)



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

Group #2

Strengths	Challenges
The recognition that we give to staff and students – positivity. Keeps morale alive.	Optimizing tech usage
Technology – how much it has grown	Keeping pace with the time and using technology appropriately. Finding ways to use in other areas.
Small town, small school feel – important values. People tend to stay in the town. Generational ties	Broadening the way we communicate
Keeping the character – keeping the family feeling	Cost – challenge
Consensus of values – everything is driven by this	How do we challenge our children
Social-Emotional and Inclusivity – ability to connect and be involved in the school	Making sure kids continue to invest in the values of the community – become life-long learners
Developing critical thinking skills	Keeping our character as a school district
Reading and developing life-long learners	

Group #3

Strengths	Challenges
Dedicated staff – go above and beyond	Technology and necessary upgrades – tech outdates very quickly
Extracurricular activities – have increased and tons of things for the kids to do during and after school	NJ S2 Legislation, which negatively impacted school budget – struggling financially
Student enthusiasm for coming to school and learning	Declining enrollment – hoping we balance out but enrollment has gone down
Blessing to have our own CST – in-house	Engaging students & families--Limited in our area, outside of school activities
Student recognition by the District & mindfulness, & character ed assemblies	Staff turnover and recruitment especially with S2
Amazing staff	Recruiting high quality teachers
Administration	School ratings and diversity in the district, ratemyschool.com
Close-knit district	Expand social media & communication
Parents—very involved & dedicated	Security concerns and upgrades
Cyber security—many student safeguards	Technology & engineering opportunities for our students – stay ahead of the curve



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

Group #4

Strengths	Challenges
Teachers – how innovative and use tech. They care. Teacher’s communication with parents	Updating curriculum more often
Communication of the district to the parents and the students	STEM program increased
ELA program and Math	Innovation without any increase in monies from State aid, nor budget cuts

Group #5

Strengths	Challenges
Starting to make progress on facility projects	Fiscal challenges
Increased security and planning for emergencies	Class sizes increasing
Supportive parents, dedication to community. Strong bond.	Facility and repair issues
Our teachers!	STEM focus could use improvement
	Would like to see more partnerships with industries, private groups to broaden imaginations
	Would like to see more opportunities to encourage parent involvement, small participation in Principal Forums
	Communication – email format, some things feel last minute
	Tailor activities to better suit age groups
	More opportunities for mindfulness

(Continues on the following page)



New Jersey School Boards Association

Celebrating 100 years of service

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

After sharing our small group results with all the evening's participants in a large group, all were thanked for their wide-ranging contributions and collaborative work.

Our next meeting is set for **Thursday, February 11, 2021** beginning at 7pm via Google Meets. The meeting has been openly advertised, in the same manner as was the January meeting, to all stakeholders of the GMRSD school community. **Participation by January attendees is strongly encouraged, and additional participation is welcomed!** We will engage in a **Visioning Activity** to help refine our collective vision for the school, which promises to be a truly *fun* and exciting evening. **Please RSVP by noon on Monday, February 8 if you would like to attend.**

The Great Meadows Regional School District Board of Education and Administration greatly appreciate the participation of our committed stakeholders in helping to help create a roadmap for our district for the next five years. We look forward to working together at our future sessions!

