



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 2: What Is Our Vision for the GMRSD Public School District?

On the evening of **February 11, 2021**, a cross-section of our stakeholders— community members, parents, educators, school district administrators, and members of the GMRSD Board of Education--came together, remotely, in a second online meeting to continue the process of strategic planning. Our work, over the course of three meetings, focuses on both the realities of and our visions for the school district. The outcomes of these meetings will form a new Strategic Plan that shall guide the district for the next five years. The first evening's session examined the current strengths and achievements of, and challenges and opportunities facing, our communities and schools. Our second meeting's focus and work revolved around our individual and collective visions for the Great Meadows Regional Public School District in the future.

After a grateful welcome from Board of Education President Alison DeMarco and opening remarks from Superintendent Michael Mai, we reviewed the reasons for and the methodology of creating a new Strategic Plan.

We then advanced to a visioning exercise: each of us imagined being away from New Jersey for five years and returning home, to find the Great Meadows Regional Public School District has been featured in a Time Magazine cover story as a national model for 21st-century education. The group was asked to ponder, *what would you envision occurring in our schools to make this happen? What would be the title of this article, touting such astonishing success? What would be the key visions in the article—meaning, what would be the means the district would have used to make such exemplary educational success a reality, if there had been **no pre-determined mandates nor limits on resources?*** Participants then divided into five small groups to develop a shared vision.

The information on the following pages is the work of the small groups, each of which wrote a title for the hypothetical Time Magazine article described above, and key visions that the article would comprise. Underlying all of our work is the District's Mission Statement, which serves as a guiding set of principles for all.

The information that follows is the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all meeting outcomes will be recorded and made available to the community.



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Group #1

Article title: "Great Meadows Making Wishes Come True"

Key Visions:

- Look into integrating authentic learning in all content areas while infusing technology and life skills into problem-based learning.
- Early grade learning through hands-on play while integrating STEM [science, technology, engineering, math].
- Including hands-on learning in all grade levels.
- Teach our students deductive reasoning while researching any given topic.
- Expand GATE [gifted and talented students' program] to more areas, including computer science, art, music and electives.
- Life skills program to help students learn budgeting skills and how to plan to live within their financial restrictions.
- Using Centenary College students to help staff extra-curricular activities and provide a richer and more diverse experience.
- Help raise civic awareness to help students find more pathways to common agreement.
- Continue to strive to increase wireless access capacity for staff and students.
- Continued opportunities for staff to access professional development opportunities.
- Maker space lab in each school to expose students to higher level thinking skills.

Group #2

Article Title: "Build it, and They Will Come"

Key Visions:

- State of the art technology.
- Small class sizes, more teachers
- Improved school security systems within the school.
- Continued expansion in Pre-K. Lower cost of tuition.
- Improved outdoor facilities with an emphasis on health and physical education.
- More course opportunities. Providing courses that will assist students in their futures.
- Adding clubs. Art club, pottery, ceramics, robotics, athletics, life skills.
- Maker space center for each school.
- Seamless schooling. Regardless of where you are, you can always be connected. Whether you are at home or in school, education is seamless.
- Innovation within the classroom to create a more effective environment. Standing desks, fidget seats, yoga balls.
- Updated curriculum with more opportunities for students. More of an emphasis on project-based learning. More PD [professional development] for teachers.

Group #2 Key Visions continued on next page



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- Increased community engagement. Getting businesses more involved in the community. Professionals exposing kids to various professions.
- After and before care programs for students. Offer breakfast before school and snack after school. Even dinner.
- Enriched STEM program, expand GATE
- Creating a learning environment where students can [learn] through their own experience and pace.
- More SE [special education] programs within our schools so we don't need to send students out of the district. Having ABA [applied behavior analysis] therapists, PT, OT [physical therapy, occupational therapy]
- More emphasis on mental wellness. Having more counselors, assemblies, clubs.

Group #3

Article Title: "Great Meadows: Inspiring a 360-Degree, Multi-Faceted Experience"

Key Visions:

- Broaden curriculum and expand beyond the Common Core.
 - Helping parents understand the WHY behind the way things are taught
- PT/OT access without IEP and 504 [individualize education plan and 504 plans for students with a long- or short-term disability or disabilities]
- More hands-on, tactile experiences.
 - More recess, more opportunities to problem solve and collaborate with peers (social emotional)
 - More open-ended, "unstructured" time
- Experiencing the content in multisensory and multimodal ways (e.g., building a sundial and observing - more wholesome experiences).
- Smaller class sizes.
- Utilize technology in a measured and age-appropriate way.
- More professional development specific teaching strategies.
 - More opportunities for teachers to seek out workshops that interest them, time to implement and turnkey learned strategies to their colleagues
- "Maker's Space" - STEM.
 - Greater access to these creative activities
- Better heating and cooling system.
- Agricultural activities (e.g., greenhouse, gardening)
 - Exploring food and health
- Educating students and families on mental health.
- Elementary and Middle School Buddies (help students transition to middle school, caring).
- More cohesive schedule across district buildings.
- Re-evaluate bus routes (e.g. 3 miles from school, 30-40 minutes on the bus).



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Group #4

Article Title: "GMRSD: Beyond Big"

Key Visions:

- All 3 buildings open, sports fields and play areas for both campuses.
- OT and PT for youngest learners regardless of IEP or 504 status.
- Professional development for teaching strategies and content delivery.
- STEM Program.
- Higher standards for para professionals.
- Strong readers (as a focus).
- Updated technology annually.
- Organized intramural sports.
- 21st century gym- use cameras to throw a ball hit a target, VR headsets, AR headsets.
- Capital improvements- class room upgrades.
- Huge curriculum that is multidisciplinary that incorporates the why, how and apply through community service projects and other long term projects.
- Working with government and state agencies to monitor streams, eco systems, build and renovate structures.
- Accelerated HS track program.
- Weekend program (extra class- real life application).
- Interaction of local businesses with school district (print shops, real jobs).
- Job skill training, e.g. flight simulators.
- Differential learning throughout the school regardless of grade or age.
- Multi language courses- kindergarten or 1st grade.
- Home economics course, wood shop, culinary arts program (open to public).
- In-house museum- created by students.
- Science exhibits.
- Simultaneous physical education 1 period.

Group #5

Article Title: "Empowering Students to Become Global Ambassadors of our Future"

Key Visions:

- Using advanced technology as a global learning tool.
- STEM Program inviting community members and also subject matter experts such as scientists.
- Broader Social/Emotional component with Guidance and social workers.
- Elem/M.S./H.S. partnership with children helping each other, with a comprehensive shadowing program and hands-on learning to create better experiences and opportunities.

Group #5 Key Visions continued on next page



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- More collaboration among teachers. More consistency of curriculum rolled out across all grade levels. This would allow children to learn at their own speed.
- Facilities with an auditorium for local drama clubs. Maybe a pool or Recreation Center for afterschool programs. All while generating revenue.
- Huge summer camps in the Field of Dreams. This would be both fun and academic to promote team learning. Possibly with a ropes course.
- A Community Outreach vegetable garden. This would help children learn by helping others in the community while helping feed the hungry.
- Ice skating rink.
- Solar/Green solution to reduce the Great Meadows carbon footprint.

After sharing and discussing the small groups' work with the entire group, and considering the outcomes of the first session, we identified five consistently emerging themes, or, "common threads." These major themes identify the five goal areas for the new Strategic Plan. We also saw that sub-themes were emerging, which should be incorporated within these goal areas, as follows.

1. Teaching & Learning

- STEM
- Hands-on, problem-based learning
- Professional Development for educators
- Instructional and social continuum from Pre K – grade 12
- Expand GATE

2. The Whole Child

- Authentic education of the whole child / play-based

3. Health and Wellness

- Mental and physical wellness

4. Diversity & Citizenship

- Civic responsibility
- Diversity
- Global Connections
- Environment
- Bringing GMRSD to the community and the community to GMRSD

5. Technology & Facilities

- Optimize existing facilities
- Thinking towards sports
- Technology to make it all happen

At the conclusion of the work session, the deep gratitude of the Board and Administration was expressed to the participants for their wide-ranging contributions and collaborative work.

Report concludes on the next page



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Our next meeting is set for **Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 7pm via Google Meets.** As with the first two Strategic Planning sessions, this meeting is publicly advertised to all stakeholders in the Great Meadows Regional School District. Participation by January and February attendees is strongly encouraged, and additional participation is welcomed!

Pre-registration is requested. Please RSVP by noon on Monday, March 8 if you would like to attend.

On March 11, we will again work in small groups. We will write and draft Goal Statements and supporting Objectives for each of the five goal areas. When pre-registering for the meeting, **participants are asked to indicate their first, second and third choices for the goal area in which they would like to work.**

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 and we appreciate your support for this important endeavor!

***We look forward to seeing you at our final meeting on March 11.
Attend with a friend!***



Great Meadows Regional School District Mission Statement

The GMRSD will provide quality educational opportunities that ensure the individual success of all students within a safe and supportive environment and to build life-long learners who will meet society's challenges into and beyond the 21st century.