

**BUILDING PARENT INVOLVEMENT:
STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PARENTS**

PARENT DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENT SUCCESS

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SAELP Report - Parent/Community Development

An often-overlooked aspect of educational staff development is a program, which enhance the skills of parents to assist and support their students. Many school systems spend vast amounts of money on programs that develop the skills of their administrative and instructional staffs in hopes that these skills will result in increased student success. Very few systems look for ways of developing one of their most valuable resources for providing programs that will insure the success of their students. These resources are the parents who are the first teachers of the students and who can have the greatest impact on the attitude and actions of the students.

The significance of parent involvement in the education of their children has been well documented. The more that parents emphasize the importance of education and reinforce that importance with positive action, the more successful their children are in school. With this basic assumption in mind, it would seem that parent involvement is a tremendous benefit to schools and should be a pivotal priority in every educational program.

A great deal of research has been done on the types of parent involvement and in identifying the extent of participation in each type within various subgroups of the general population. I prefer to look at parent involvement as a continuum through which a parent can progress given the right kinds of experiences just as a student progresses through the school curriculum by mastering the knowledge and skills of each subject or as a teacher develops from a novice to a master. If parent involvement is a developmental process then parents can be moved through that process and can become more effective.

CONTINUUM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- A. No Involvement
- B. Involvement as a learner
- C. Involvement as a supporter
- D. Involvement as a teacher
- E. Involvement as a leader

The five stages in the continuum of parent involvement are no involvement, involvement as a learner, involvement as a supporter, involvement as a teacher, and involvement as a leader. (See attached chart)

No involvement: Many of the problems which education and society face with young people are directly related to the lack of involvement by parents with their children.

Learner: When a parent is involved as a learner, he/she receives information, attends meetings and conferences, receives guidance and assistance, and receives education and training.

Supporter: Involvement as a supporter is characterized by applying information, participating in meetings and conferences, attending student events, using guidance and assistance, applying education and training, and celebrating successes.

Teacher: When parents volunteer, provide information, reach out to others, provide guidance and assistance, and provide education and training, they are involved as teachers.

~~Decision-maker~~ LEADER: Participation in decision making, operating programs, initiating and developing programs, developing the potential in others, leading organizations, advocating, lobbying, representing and governing are characteristics of involvement as a leader.

Schools and districts which are successful already operate parent involvement and development programs to some extent. However, for the most part these programs are fragmented and are lacking in universal application within the school or district. A program of parent involvement should begin with a statement of commitment to parent involvement but should continue into a process that includes everyone. In order to be really effective parent involvement programs must be well designed to provide opportunities for development along the continuum of parent involvement in order to insure that each and every parent reaches his/her maximum potential.

The National Parent Teacher Association is a tremendous source of information and programs for providing parent development opportunities at every level in the parent involvement continuum. National PTA provides numerous pamphlets and brochures, a wide variety of programs that are ready to implement, and an organizational structure with support elements in every state. Some states such as California have developed comprehensive parent involvement handbooks with step by step guidance in creating a parent involvement program. Parents at the level of learner, supporter, teacher or leader will find opportunities to develop their skills through the National Parent Teacher Association.

Following are a few examples of parent development activities or programs at each of the four levels of parent involvement.

Involvement as a learner

1. Receiving information
2. Attending meetings and conferences
3. Receiving guidance and assistance
4. Receiving education and training

Through parent education programs such as delivered as a part of North Kingstown' Child Opportunity Zone (COZ) (see attached listing of activities), parents become involved as learners. Through COZ programs, parents are trained to teach other parents how to establish rituals that promote student success, how to monitor student progress, how to motivate and communicate with their student and how to assist their student at home. The process leads to the establishment of parent support groups and ongoing parent development. Parent training programs are a key component to involving parents as learners and should form the base for any parent development program. If these parent-training programs are taught and operated by other parents, parent involvement as a teacher and leader are being fostered.

There are numerous other ways in which schools provide parents with opportunities to become involved as learners. Open houses where teachers explain the school program provide an opportunity to learn more about how the school operates and become acquainted with school personnel. Parent conferences give parents an opportunity to learn about their student's success in school and to get tips on things that can be done to support the child. School newsletters, handbooks, activity calendars, progress reports, textbooks, assignment sheets, etc. provide other opportunities for parents to learn more about the school and its program. Programs like iParent, listserves, and web pages also create opportunities for parents and community members to become active learners in understanding education.

As parents learn more about their child's education, they begin to understand what they can do to assist and support their student. At both the elementary and secondary level parents are involved as supporters. All schools provide many opportunities for parents to attend student programs, student exhibitions, athletic events, or celebrate success. These parents become more involved in the education of their students, expand their knowledge about the school, its programs and personnel and develop an interest in assisting their students.

Involvement as a supporter

1. Applying information
2. Participating in meetings and conferences
3. Attending student events
4. Using guidance and assistance
5. Applying education and training
6. Celebrating successes

Parents are also involved as supporters when they establish rituals that contribute to student success such as reading to/with their student or setting up a place and time to study. When they talk about school events with their child, display student work at home, or celebrate student success at school, parents support their children and insure that the student develops a positive attitude towards school. Parents who are supporters never lose an opportunity to tell their student that they are proud of the success that the student has achieved. Students who are supported return the support with higher achievement and more success.

Involvement as a teacher

1. Volunteering
2. Providing information
3. Reaching out to others
4. Providing guidance and assistance
5. Providing education and training

Parents who are successful supporters want to share that success with other parents and students. They become involved as teachers. The most common way parents become involved in the education of their students at the elementary level is as a volunteer in the school. In North Kingstown Parent volunteers programs are coordinated through the Laymen in North Kingstown (LINKS) and Business Education Partnership as well as Parent Teacher Organizations at each school. At the secondary level, parents volunteer through Parent Teacher Student Organization programs, booster clubs or extra curricular programs. These programs get parents involved as teachers of their students and other students. At the same time the parents learn more about their child's classroom, program and school. They see good teaching practices modeled by the teacher, coach or sponsor. They gain the knowledge and skills to function effectively as decision-makers.

Involvement as a leader

1. Participating in decision making
2. Operating programs
3. Initiating and developing programs
4. Developing the potential in others
5. Leading organizations
6. Advocating, lobbying and representing
7. Governing

By establishing Parent Teacher Organizations, School Advisory Councils (see attached policy) and Booster Clubs, as well as involving parents in Strategic Planning Processes (see attached process), Improvement Teams, and special issue task groups (see attached task group) schools and districts provide parents and community members with an opportunity to become involved as decision makers in the education of students.

Fund raising or school service projects not only raise money or provide programs; they provide opportunities to develop the skills of parents as leaders. These parents develop the skills and knowledge to lead organizations, establish policy and advocate for their children. They move into leadership roles on the school board, state or national parent organizations, or in the legislature.

As you can see, parent involvement is a key element to student success at school. Each time a parent has contact with the school, both that parent and that student benefit by obtaining knowledge or developing skills. Every school and school district should insure that parent involvement is fostered and that each and every parent has opportunities to move along the continuum of parent involvement and develop into key school leaders.

NK School District Parent Involvement and Parent Leadership Training Opportunities delivered through the Child Opportunity Zone (COZ)

All opportunities listed below are designed to provide parents with parenting and leadership skills that will improve their families chances for educational and life success.

Workshops and training opportunities are delivered in small, family friendly settings. All forums for parents are designed to encourage comfort, meaningful engagement and to build self-confidence in parents as they assume leadership roles in their families, schools and communities.

Parent learning opportunities serve approximately 450-500 parents and children each year and focus on building personal capacity through the identification of skills/abilities through the delivery of relevant and "literacy level" appropriate educational offerings in the following areas and skill-sets:

- Problem identification/problem solving
- Conflict management, conflict resolution
- Critical thinking and assessment
- Written & verbal communications
- Organization and coordination
-

Types of workshops and training opportunities that are on going:

- ABE (Adult Basic Education), GED, and ESL
Offered through EVENSTART Family Literacy Program
- Professional Training for parents in EVENSTART
Offered through CCRI (at Quonset) to become certified, employed
- Parent workshops (birth-5)
Monthly discussion & support groups through PAT
Weekly parent/child Music and Movement classes
Monthly RI Early Learning Standards interactive parent/child play groups
"Dinner Conversations" evening workshops with guest speakers on parent identified topics
Evening interactive / guided "playgroups" for fathers and children together
- Home-School Connections
Literature dissemination and support for parents to be effective, confident advocates and partners in their child's education
Real-World Connections parent presentations/leaders
Have Lunch with your Child

Family Field Trips and Family Arts & Literacy Events
RAD Kids Training for kids & parents

- Early Childhood Education Parent Resources / Referrals
PAT home visits
N.K. KIN-NECT pre-K liaison (connecting families with schools & resources as early as possible)
Child Outreach Screenings (over 500 screenings per year to ages 3-5)
Evening and daytime workshops with child development/area specific specialists
- Community Collaborations to Support Parent Leadership/Parent Involvement
RI ELS Technical Assistance Project
Preschool Provider Trainings
Collaboration with Bayside Health (oral health project)
URI Parent Academy Project
(COZ staff to serve on advisory committee on behalf of NK schools)
Title I Parent Involvement Committee
- Teen and Twenties Program (Teen Parents)
Weekly workshops focusing on nutrition, child and self-advocacy
- Family Nurturing Program
Weekly Discussion Club for Parents
10 week National Family Nurturing Program for families (offered several times per year)
- Book Club for Parents
Weekly discussion of Family First by Dr. Phil McGraw (W/ URI)
- School Transition Support
N.K. KIN-NECT pre-K program (for kids/families of poverty)
Kindergarteners in Transition (KIT) information disseminated to all K families
Home visits to incoming K families
Summer Transition to K program for risk-positive children/families @ Title I School
Parental classroom participation and workshops
Workshops offered to incoming preschool children/families district-wide

SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE Policy

School Advisory Committees (SAC) are established at each school to provide parents, teachers and community members with a forum to discuss and resolve local school issues and policies. Each school principal in the North Kingstown School Department is responsible for insuring that a School Advisory Committee is functioning at the school. The superintendent will insure that a process for establishing School Advisory Committees is established. All administrative procedures related to this will be approved by the School Committee.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE Administrative Instruction

Purpose: School Advisory Committees (SAC) have been created in the North Kingstown Schools to establish a process to provide parents and community members a forum in which to discuss policy issues, investigate alternatives, and make recommendations to the principal concerning all aspects of school operations within the control of the principal except for the assignment, evaluation and discipline of school personnel. Policy issues are issues within the control of the local school which impact on the school as a whole or on significant groups of students in the school. Policy issues include resource allocation, curriculum improvement, facilities improvement, disciplinary procedures, administrative procedures, school climate and community relations.

Composition: Each School Advisory Committee will consist of seven members who will be elected by the school community at large for a term of office of one year. Four members will be parents of students who currently attend the school. Two members will be teachers or non-supervisory staff members. One member will be a resident of the school's attendance area who does not have a student enrolled in the school. The parent and community members cannot be employees of the school department or their spouses. For secondary schools, one student will be appointed to the committee by the school principal. At least one parent member of the Jamestown community will be a member of the high school advisory counsel. The school principal will be an ex-officio member of the committee.

Elections: In the spring of each school year, the School

Advisory Committee will appoint a nomination committee which will solicit nominations for each category of positions. This committee will insure that the entire school community is aware of the nomination process. Every attempt will be made to provide more nominees than there are positions. The nomination committee will provide a brief biography and statement from each candidate. The School Advisory Committee will appoint an election committee which will conduct an election prior to June 1st. Elections will be by secret ballot by the residents of the attendance zone, the employees of the school, and the parents of any student enrolled in the school from another attendance zone. Each voter may vote for up to four parents, two school employees and one community member who will appear in separate categories on the ballot. Student members will be selected from among students elected by the student body or a portion of the student body. In implementing this program, the school principal will appoint the nomination and election committees, in order to complete the process no later than the last day in September 1996. The term of office for a school advisory committee member will be from June 15th to June 14th of the following year.

Officers: Each School Advisory Committee will elect from among its membership a chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary. The chairperson will be responsible for formulating the agenda at the meeting, conducting the meetings, and ensuring that open lines of communication are maintained with the school principal and school community. The vice chairperson will assume the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the chairperson. The secretary will prepare the minutes of the meetings and be responsible for the maintenance of all records of advisory committee actions.

Meetings: Each School Advisory Committee will meet at least five times during the school year. The agenda, date, time and place for meetings must be publicized at least one week in advance of the meeting. All meetings are open to the public and shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (Revised).

Procedures: Each School Advisory Committee will establish procedures for operations and communications within the school community. Every attempt should be made to seek community input into decisions and to reach consensus within the community for decisions. At the beginning of its term

each school advisory committee will conduct an assessment of the current status of school issues and determine its objectives for the year. These objectives should form the bulk of the committee's work and efforts.

Prior to making a recommendation the School Advisory Committee should insure that the topic has been fully investigated and that the school community has had an opportunity to participate in defining the recommendation. Recommendations of the school advisory committee will be communicated to the school principal in writing for implementation and/or action. The school principal will have up to two weeks to respond to the committee concerning the disposition of the recommendation. If the committee is dissatisfied with the school principal's response, the recommendation may be referred to the superintendent who will respond within two weeks. If the recommendation has not been satisfactorily resolved by the superintendent, the School Advisory Committee may refer the recommendation to the school committee who will be the final arbiter of the issue. Every attempt will be made by all parties to resolve the issue at the lowest possible point.

End of Year Report: Prior to June first, each School Advisory Committee chairperson will prepare a report of the committee's activities during the school year. This report will include a list of the members, meeting dates, issues resolved, issues pending, and suggestions for improvement of the process. The report will be submitted through the principal to the superintendent. The superintendent will complete a consolidated report which will be submitted to the school committee no later than July first.

Vacancies: Should vacancies in the School Advisory Committee arise during the school year, they will be filled by the candidates within the same category who were nominated but not elected with the individual receiving the highest number of votes in the category vacant given the first opportunity to fill the vacancy. Vacancies in the officer positions will be filled by majority vote of the remaining members of the committee.

Strategic Planning Process

Engaging the Community in Planning

An ambitious schedule was developed as the planning team identified groups and individuals who could have meaningful input to the plan, and with whom a dialogue could take place in the proper settings. The schedule that was developed and implemented as follows:

August 10 Presentation to Central office administrators, principals, assistant principals at retreat

September Introduced by principals to Parent Teacher Organization (PTO's) and School Advisory Committees (SAC's) at their meetings

October 12 Presentation to NK School Committee

October 20 Teacher Focus Group

October 26 Student Focus Group at North Kingstown High School

November 3
& November 7 Parent Focus Groups

November 17 Business and Community Leader Focus Group

At each meeting or focus group, the plan was discussed and participants were invited to make comments and offer changes or additions to the plan. At the Focus Groups, there was also a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the NKSD, suggestions for improvement, and what each group thought were the strategic priorities for the future. Following are the key points that emerged from all the focus groups:

Strengths of the North Kingstown School System

- Teachers, administrators and staff
- Students and families
- Positive culture and sense of school spirit
- School facilities, especially high school
- Academic, extracurricular, and special programs.

Weakness of the North Kingstown School System

- Lack of support for education
- Leadership conflict / politics
- Lack of consistency / equity
- Lack of input / inclusion

- Poor communications
- Facilities issues / reconfiguration
- Shrinking resources
- Lack of planning

Recommendations

- Work to bring groups back together
- Involve, and use input from, key groups
- More focus on long term planning
- Create new models / focus on solutions

After each constituent feedback session, the planning team would meet and make revisions to the plan based on the feedback. Therefore, the Working Document continuously evolved and improved throughout the process so that each subsequent group would be presented with the latest version.

The Educational Summit

After all the presentations and focus groups were completed, the planning team worked on the final Working Document to be presented at the Educational Summit on December 3, 2006. The Educational Summit was designed to be an inclusive process that would engage the energy and ideas of NKSD's key constituents to bring full community input to the issues that had been discussed throughout the process and to have input to the final plan. Invitations were sent to:

Focus Group Participants

School Committee Members
 Town Council Members
 Town Manager
 SELAC
 COZ representatives
 SAC members
 PTO members
 Teachers
 Principals
 Union Representatives
 Committees
 Rotary
 Chamber
 Higher Education
 Preschools and nursery school

An open invitation was published in the newspaper inviting members of the community to attend.

A representative sample of 65 community members attended the Educational Summit, devoting their time to discussing the plan and making suggestions as a group, and then forming work groups to focus on the specific strategies, goals and objectives with a task to identify the biggest priority areas, and to make further suggestions to the plan itself.

The Educational Summit was extremely successful at achieving all of the above objectives. The work groups identified several areas as the most important priorities, and they provided many good suggestions and new ideas to all areas of the plan.

Another very successful feature of the Educational Summit was an open dialogue between Superintendent Halley and all the participants regarding what kind of input groups would like to have going forward. A number of committees and task forces were suggested and set up on the spot, with lists circulating for those who wished to sign up for one of these initiatives.

School Starting Times Advisory Committee

Be it resolved that the school committee appoints representatives of the school community to a committee to study the issue of revising the start times of the schools in the North Kingstown School District. This committee will be composed of a representative nominated by the School Advisory Committee of each school supplemented by volunteers representing various constituencies of the school community to include parents, teachers, staff, administrators, community members, town officials and students. The committee will consist of no more than twenty members and will elect its chair from among the members. The task of the School Starting Times Advisory Committee will be to recommend long-term options for the revision of the start times for all schools in the North Kingstown School Department. A preliminary report describing a variety of options for implementation with advantages and disadvantages of each option will be presented to the school committee no later than the working session in April of 2006. A final report will be presented to the school committee by June of 2006. The School Starting Times Advisory committee will consider all issues related to the implementation of new starting times for district schools including impact on student health issues, impact on extra curricular activity programs, impact on families, impact on the community and work place, impact on transportation, and potential cost of each option.

Educational Summit

Agenda

10:00 AM	Welcome/Introductions	Superintendent, etc.
10:30 AM	Presentation of Focus Group Plan Development and Research Finding	Consultant
11:00 AM	Discussion/Questions	Consultant All
11:30 AM	Form Discussion Groups (self-selected and covering three topics: Improving Parent & Community Engagement; Improving Learning & Teaching; Improving the Adequacy and Equity of Resources and the Physical Plant)	All
11:50 AM	Hold one group discussion @ 20 minutes	All
12:10 – 12:40 PM	Lunch	
12:40 PM	Hold two group discussions / round robins @ 20 minutes each	All
1:20 PM	Group reports @ 10 minutes each	reporters
1:50 PM	Wrap up and Thanks	Superintendent

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Rotary

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Parent Feedback from Curriculum Group

Question #1: The first question asked participants to focus on the present.

Every organization has its strengths and weaknesses, or assets and challenges. Please take a minute to think about what you consider the greatest strength(s) of the current curriculum, instruction, and assessment in North Kingstown.

What would you never want to see changed?

- Class size – Keep it low
- Standards, expectations
- Individualized instruction
- Curriculum cycle – it provides trust
- The arts program: school productions, exhibitions
- Strong science program at all levels
- Levels of instruction – sorting students based on what they can do
- Heterogeneous grouping at the middle school
- Keeping current with technology
- Bus monitors
- Parent involvement
- A curriculum director position

Question #2: This asked participants to reflect on the challenges or weaknesses in the current curriculum, instruction, and assessment program of North Kingstown.

What do you think hampers or hinders the content, the delivery, or the development of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district?

- The teacher contract and tenure
- Professional Development that is not mandatory
- Guidance advice that is not appropriate to student ability
- Low expectations for students
- Lack of extra student supports when necessary
- Not enough adult support in elementary classrooms, particularly kindergarten
- Lack of academic rigor, particularly at the middle school (students need to learn to be independent and responsible for learning)
- Lack of clearly defined benchmarks for learning, particularly at the middle school
- Lack of articulation among grade levels
- If we don't continue to promote high level math and science
- Cutting Advanced Placement classes
- Not enough differentiation of instruction
- Not enough "applied learning" skills required of students
- Facility at WMS in particular but also in the elementary schools a lack of space for science, technology and the arts

- Not enough use of community resources to support and expand learning (use the community as a classroom)
- Not providing a forum for parents to express opinions

Question #3: Looking toward the future:

What do you think the public's role should be in determining or guiding new directions for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in North Kingstown?

- Attend focus groups and educational summits
- Provide constructive input

Question #4:

What process or strategies do you think would help parents and the community better understand curriculum, instruction, and assessment in North Kingstown schools?

- Don't keep secrets
- Explain why changes are being made
- More explanation at every level – what is being taught? Regular notes home
- Maintain website in a more timely manner
- Teachers could send home more personalized information focusing on curriculum
- Share syllabi with parents
- Provide child care at information sessions
- Make curriculum more understandable (reduce jargon)
- Invite parents into classrooms to observe and take part
- Provide grade level curriculum plans
- Have guest speakers at PTOs and provide for wide distribution on minutes

Other:

Participants were asked if they had “other” topics to address which were not covered in the previous questions:

- Infuse global and environmental awareness in the curriculum
- Introduce civics at the middle school
- More physical education and more diversity, teach lifestyle development
- Requirement for student involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Require community service of students beginning at middle school

North Kingstown
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Vacancies: Should vacancies in the School Advisory Committee arise during the school year, they will be filled by the candidates within the same category who were nominated but not elected with the individual receiving the highest number of votes in the category vacant given the first opportunity to fill the vacancy. Vacancies in the officer positions will be filled by majority vote of the remaining members of the committee.

School Starting Times Advisory Committee

Be it resolved that the school committee appoints representatives of the school community to a committee to study the issue of revising the start times of the schools in the North Kingstown School District. This committee will be composed of a representative nominated by the School Advisory Committee of each school supplemented by volunteers representing various constituencies of the school community to include parents, teachers, staff, administrators, community members, town officials and students. The committee will consist of no more than twenty members and will elect its chair from among the members. The task of the School Starting Times Advisory Committee will be to recommend long-term options for the revision of the start times for all schools in the North Kingstown School Department. A preliminary report describing a variety of options for implementation with advantages and disadvantages of each option will be presented to the school committee no later than the working session in April of 2006. A final report will be presented to the school committee by June of 2006. The School Starting Times Advisory committee will consider all issues related to the implementation of new starting times for district schools including impact on student health issues, impact on extra curricular activity programs, impact on families, impact on the community and work place, impact on transportation, and potential cost of each option.

Script for Focus Groups

#1 The Present – Assets and Challenges

The first question of the evening

Is about the present.

Every organization, every entity has its strengths and its weaknesses –

or as I like to call them assets and challenges.

Different groups see these in different lights.

So we are interested in your view on this as [teachers, parents, students, community members].

Please take a minute to think

About what you consider North Kingstown's greatest asset.

What makes this school district really great,

that you would never want to lose?

Then think about its greatest liability.

What hinders, or hampers this school district,

that you would like to overcome?

Use the paper you have in front of you to jot down your answers

and then we'll go around the table to check out our present reality.

(Do a quick round robin of the responses, noting themes and original ideas.)

#2 The Future – Seven Strategies

OK, Thank you for that good start.

The second question is about the future,

and more specifically about what you feel is more important

to assure the successful future of

the North Kingstown School system.

(Pass out seven strategies.)

The handout I am passing around

lists seven strategies

that the Rhode Island Department of Education

has developed as its key expectations

of all RI school districts.

RIDE's assumption is that each school district

must be able to perform well in each of these strategy areas

to achieve its mission and objectives.

RIDE is encouraging all school districts

to adopt these strategies

in their strategic planning process

to help create a common language

for goal setting and as the basis for RIDE evaluation

of school districts.

- 1. Leading the Focus on Learning and Achievement** – providing leadership to maintain a constant and productive focus on learning and achievement, and communicating what students need to know and what is needed to ensure that students reach the goals set for student learning and development.
- 2. Ensuring Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources** – the district addresses different kinds and different levels of student needs including academic, social, developmental, and health; the district distributes its fiscal resources in relation to student need.
- 3. Guiding the Selection and Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment** – curriculum is aligned with the mission and goals for student learning, and with district and state standards for literacy, numeracy, and other academic proficiencies, and has embedded assessments to gauge learning and adjust instruction to maximally promote each student’s learning.
- 4. Recruiting, Supporting and Retaining High Quality Personnel** – the district actively and inventively recruits candidates in ways that result in hiring staff with the highest qualifications possible, and supports staff to make them as effective as possible in their work e.g. mentoring, professional development.
- 5. Using Information for Planning and Accountability** – planning, continuous improvement, use of technology.
- 6. Engaging Families and the Community** – using a variety of ways to connect with families and the community, especially connecting with parents concerning the learning of the children; involving parents and community members on committees and teams, letting the community know about the school system’s plans, successes, and needs.
- 7. Ensuring Safe and Supportive Environments for Students** – firm and constructive policies about school culture and behavior; positive learning environments with the greatest individual freedom that is consistent with the safety of every member of the school community.

We are going to spend some time on these strategies because this year is the first time that the North Kingstown School District will be integrating these strategies into their long-range plans.

And so we want to hear from you about what you think of these strategies. What do they mean to you? And how do you think the North Kingstown School District is doing in these areas. Where is it strong? Where it must improve? And what are your best ideas for the future?

I am guessing that we have a good group To address these areas tonight. So let’s begin.

The first question is about priorities.
As you look at this list of seven,
and from where you sit as a [teacher, parent, student, community member]
which of these seven requirements
deserve the greatest focus over the next five years
in order to achieve your mission?

Of course all these items are important.
But usually they are not all equally important
in all districts at all times.
There are always areas of priority depending on the goals of the district
and where each school district is in each of the strategy areas.

I would like you to take a few minutes
to look over the list and select your top three items.
Put your ideas on paper if you like.
Then we will go around the table
and have a discussion on why you picked those three.

*(Allow 4 minutes. Then hold a discussion to gather feedback on areas of importance to them,
and reasons why. This will cover strengths and weaknesses.)*

#3 North Kingstown School District Plan

Thank you for that good work and excellent discussion.
Now let's take the plan a step further.
(Pass out strategies with objectives.)

What you are receiving now is the same RIDE strategies
With objectives that have been developed to date.
What I would like to do now
is to ask you to take a few more minutes
to review these objectives and then,
keeping in mind our previous discussion
jot down your ideas for other objectives actions or initiatives.
Things you would think will make the plan
better, more successful
things you yourself would like to be a part of.
Then we will have a brief roundtable discussion
about these additional ideas to add to the list.
You do not have to have an idea for all seven.
just go wherever your ideas take you.
You may also comment on anything that is already there.

Use the paper provided to jot down ideas
so that when we go around

it will be easier.

Thanks. I will check back with you in 10 minutes.

If you need more refreshments to keep you going please help yourself.

(after 10 minutes)

Ok, let's see what you came up with.

I know this is not a lot of time to think about all the possibilities

but it is the group discussion

that really makes things come to life.

Let's give it a shot.

(Hold discussion of ideas. Establish where the energy is around certain strategies, themes, explore these areas more with the group, look for causes, solutions, ways to advance the ideas, and possible road blocks to success. End result should be enhancements to the plan, and a sense of areas where teachers are most interested.)

Thank group. Express appreciation for their participation and ideas. Let them know the next steps. Ask for final thoughts, suggestions. Thank them again.