

North Kingstown 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.