Parsippany-Troy Hills Township Schools

Strategic Planning Update Phase II

November 2017

The Process

The Parsippany-Troy Hills Board of Education set a goal to implement a 3-5 year Strategic Plan. The process included staff, parents and community members. The Core Team then drafted a new Mission Statement and the three highest priority goals to move our district forward.

The proposed goals and Mission Statement were presented to the Board of Education and approved on December 15, 2016.

Phase II was implemented and individual committees aligned to the three strategic planning goals met to build the Action Plans to move each goal forward.

The following is an update from theses committees on their work thus far.

Innovation and Rigor

Our district will create an innovative and rigorous educational experience in a borderless learning community that produces creative students who are problem solvers and self-directed individuals.

Chairs: Dr. Jeff Charney and Mrs. Pamela Freund

Two meetings have taken place to date:

In the first meeting, the work was scoped out to a) define the terms in the goal; b) create a model and gather exemplars that clarify these terms; c) develop an action plan for the district to achieve the strategic goal.

A broad discussion ensued in which exemplars of innovative, borderless endeavors in our district were shared. Our robotics team in the High School, our maker spaces in the elementary schools, the tech electives and literacy centers in the middle schools are exemplars which we currently have in Parsippany-Troy Hills. These descriptions guided us in framing questions: 1) What is rigor and what should it look like in Parsippany-Troy Hills? 2) What does innovation look like in Parsippany-Troy Hills? 3) What is borderless learning?

Committee members were encouraged to place research articles that would back the concepts of the goal on our Team Drive.

Three sub committees were organized to established definitions for:

Borderless

Innovative

Rigorous

Innovation and Rigor

At the second meeting, definitions were shared:

Borderless

A borderless community will expand opportunities for learning toward an optimal learning environment.   This community includes, but is not limited to community service projects, field trips, project based learning, utilization of experts in the field, elective classes, flipped classrooms and virtual and Vo-tech experiences for students as well as training, conferences and grant opportunities for teachers.

Through our discussion we noted several boundaries to the learning experience that curtail the examples provided above. Organizational (use of time and space) and communication (digital presence and timely, assistive response) structure seemed to be the greatest concern. As a result, the research collected for the purpose of "Borderless" will address each of these concerns.

Innovation:

Innovating teaching and learning is passion-driven exploration that embraces a new and progressive approach to creating connected, invested and self directed learners.

Discussion ensued as to how school schedules and PD centers may further the work in this concept. The population of non college bound students was also discussed here. The role of technology was debated.

Innovation and Rigor

Rigorous

Rigor is the result of work that augments students' thinking in new and interesting ways. It occurs when students are encouraged toward a sophisticated understanding of fundamental ideas and are driven by curiosity to discover what they don't know. A rigorous environment includes instruction and school work experiences that are academically, intellectually and personally challenging and lead to significant growth trajectories. Future discussion includes:

What does the model(s) look like in PTHSD and what is our vision?

What does the progression look like, K-12?

What school day schedule best supports these endeavors?

How do we best integrate an action plan that achieves these goals?

What research helps us achieve a recommended action plan?

We are scheduled to meet three more times to decide on the strategies that we want to include and to start to develop the action plan.

Social and Emotional

***A**ll students will receive social and emotional support to become adaptable, confident citizens who embody self-awareness and strong interpersonal skills, capable of responsible decision-making and managing their emotions and behaviors.*

Chairs: Dr. Denis Mulroony and Mrs. Michele Neal

So far, we have held two meetings and have completed the following:

Established framing questions for our group:

➢ What does the model(s) look like and what is our end goal?

➢ How do we come up with goals suitable and appropriate for all students? How do we want students to feel? How can we achieve that?

➢ What does the progression look like? Elementary to High School

➢ What evidence based strategies are out there to help us achieve our goals?

Social and Emotional

Brainstormed and identified practices and exemplars that we researched and discussed in more depth. These practices/strategies included:

·   Mindfulness
·   Student Advisory (middle school)
·   High School Schedule/Unit Lunch (high school)
·   Freshmen Seminar/Freshmen Orientation
·   Nurtured Heart (staff training)
·   Positive Behavior Supports (elementary)
·   Service Learning/Service Nights
·   Leadership Training
·   Elementary to Middle School Transition
·   Peer Leaders
·   Character.org
·   Project Lead the Way
·   LeadUThere.com
·   Elementary "Tool Box"
·   5 Core Competencies (Casel.org)
·   School - Parent/Community Connections
·   Camp College (high school)
·   Differentiated Classroom
·   Teacher Wellness
·   Cognitive Based Problem Solving /Social Emotional Learning

 We are scheduled to meet three more times through November and December to decide on the strategies that we want to include and to begin to develop the action plan.

Professional Learning

Our community of adult learners will be fully engaged in professional growth experiences which enable them to continuously hone their craft and maximize student achievement.

Chairs: Mr. Barry Haines and Mrs. Angelina Martino Finnegan

Our full committee has met three times thus far.

- ➢ We established framing questions for our group:

- ➢ What is our end goal?

- ➢ What does meaningful and relevant professional learning look like?

- ➢ How can best practices and exemplars guide us to achieve our goals?

- ➢ How do adults see themselves as learners?

- ➢ How do we maximize the impact of peers?

- ➢ How can we best utilize technology for professional learning?

Professional Learning

We are also engaging in the following:

➢ We are having robust discussions about how to meaningfully engage adult learners and provide relevant professional growth experiences.

➢ We are examining our existing district professional learning structures, along with researching best practices.

➢ Thus far we have identified professional learning practices that we want to either continue, or bring to our district, while also identifying practices that we wish to move away from at this time.

➢ We are investigating ways to utilize and organize curriculum days and monthly professional learning time to be respectful of staff members' time and interests, and to maximize impact on student learning.

➢ Our committee is also exploring the feasibility of implementing Fall/Spring/Summer personal learning series in district to provide a choice of course offerings that address professional learning goals.

➢ We are also exploring a choice of course offerings that address personal learning goals and interests of our stakeholders.

We are scheduled to meet two to three more times to develop our action plan to help us progress towards attainment of our strategic plan goal.