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**3D Strategic Planning**

**“Determination, Dream and Destiny by Design”**

**LINDEN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**October 29, 2024 - Meeting #1 - Outcomes**

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Linden Public School District is to promote distinction through the infinite resource that is Linden’s diversity, combined with our profound commitment to instructional excellence, so that each and every student achieves their maximum potential in an engaging, inspiring, and challenging learning environment.

The Linden Public School District is committed to developing respect for diversity, excellence in education, and a commitment to service, in order to promote global citizenship and ensure personal success for all students.

**What are the Strengths, Achievements and Challenges**

**of the Linden School District?**

On October 29, 2024, Linden Public Schools District administrators, staff, parents/guardians, and community members, fifty-five (55) in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The meeting began with Ms. Atiya Y. Perkins, Superintendent, presenting the current “State of the Schools” report. Jeanne Cleary from the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) was present and reviewed the strategic planning process for the group.

We then gathered in eight small groups to identify the strengths and points of pride in our district and community, and to brainstorm what opportunities and challenges the school district faces. Each group identified their “top 10” (or thereabouts) list of strengths and challenges for the district, which were then shared with the large group of all participants. Underlying all our work is the District’s Mission Statement.

The information that follows is the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all meeting outcomes will be listed in this memo and will be posted on the district website for the wider community.

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 1**

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| 1. Commitment and Dedication of our Teachers | 1. Security / School Safety: Bullying |
| 1. Increased engagement via social media and community | 1. Lack of teacher engagement in community |
| 1. Personalized phone messages and monthly school calendars to keep parents informed | 1. Combined engagement from parents and teachers |
| 1. IB Program | 1. Lack of transparency |
| 1. Increased Security Measures | 1. Decreased graduation rate and academic rating |
| 1. ROTC Program | 1. School Curriculum |
| 1. Building Improvements (ex: playgrounds) | 1. Low teacher resources/support in special education programs |
| 1. Innovative student body | 1. Lack of parent involvement (PTA/ Increase parent academy) |
| 1. Enhanced technology | 1. Embracing the motto “It takes a village” |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 2**

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| 1. Staff that is dedicated | 1. Lack of certified staff |
| 1. Early Childhood programs | 1. Attendance |
| 1. Budgeting for programs | 1. Space |
| 1. Tutoring | 1. Graduation rate |
| 1. Cross-curricular integration | 1. Addressing the needs of subgroups |
| 1. Professional Development | 1. Navigating the use of AI |
| 1. Support of Central Registration | 1. Mental health needs of students and families |
| 1. Data analysis | 1. Parental involvement |
| 1. One to one all students and teachers | 1. Fiscal sustainability |
| 1. Lps outreach and media team | 1. Transient population |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 3**

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| 1. Technology (IT Support) | 1. Substitutes |
| 1. Professional Development | 1. Drop Out Rate |
| 1. Diversity of Staff and Students | 1. Constant Movement |
| 1. Community Support | 1. Hiring More Counselor Support for Staff and Students for mental health |
| 1. Leadership Strength | 1. Cultural Sensitivity |
| 1. Security | 1. More Training to address diversity |
| 1. College Partnerships | 1. State Testing Scores |
| 1. College Credit Opportunities | 1. Absenteeism |
| 1. High Expectations | 1. Older Facilities |
| 1. Welcome Center (ML Support) | 1. Outgrowing Buildings |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 4**

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| 1. The diversity of our community population. | 1. Improve community awareness of the programs within the district. |
| 1. Opportunities we provide our children, such as our Fine and Performing Arts programs. | 1. Improve the public image of the district as a whole. |
| 1. Dedication of staff for our students. | 1. Improve parent engagement. Better scheduling of school events for working parents. Website needs improvement. |
| 1. Curricula provided to our students, ie.- IB program at the high school. | 1. Improve communication with community about parental service offerings. Use different modes of communication and offer asynchronous options. |
| 1. Growth of professional development within the district. Mentor program for our new teachers and continuous development of new staff. | 1. Recruitment and retaining of teachers to fill vacancies. |
| 1. Security procedures across the district. | 1. Student attendance and chronic absenteeism. |
| 1. Upgrades happening all throughout the district (lighting, playgrounds, security, etc.) | 1. Meeting the expanding needs of our multilingual department. |
| 1. Budget surplus and no tax increase last year. |  |
| 1. Before and after care programs provided for our students and parents. |  |
| 1. All of the technology offerings within our district |  |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 5**

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| 1. Great Technology: Apple One-to-One | 1. Increase in student population; where are the students going? |
| 1. Security | 1. Teacher shortage |
| 1. Facility upgrades | 1. Is technology substituting critical thinking skills? |
| 1. SEL supports | 1. Lack of community members at Board of Education meetings |
| 1. Staff Investment in the community | 1. ML students: How are we going to work with our children effectively? |
| 1. Community Partnerships | 1. Family Engagement |
| 1. Special Education: Some schools have robust programs to address students’ needs | 1. Academics: Test scores leave a lot to be desired. |
| 1. Business Office | 1. Special Education: Are all students’ needs being addressed? |
| 1. Diverse Demographics | 1. Need for more tutoring programs within the schools for after-school hours |
| 1. Professional Development Opportunities | 1. Graduation Rate has declined. Can family engagement increase this? |
|  | 1. Need for an “Open Door Policy” for the secondary schools: Bring parents/families back into the building to assist in celebrating student success. |
|  | 1. More pronounced advertisement of community resources/opportunities |
|  | 1. Utilizing retired citizens to help |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 6**

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| 1. Great Communication – Class Dojo   Elementary Level | 1. Communication in Middle School and High School – almost non-existent w/teachers |
| 1. Before & After Care Program | 1. Teacher Retention/ Turn Over / Quality |
| 1. Title 1 | 1. Scheduling conflicts with extra help (tutoring) and sports |
| 1. Sense of Community with Admin. | 1. Student to teacher Ratio is extremely high in some of the schools (not in others) |
| 1. Fine Arts Program | 1. Inconsistency between schools |
| 1. HS Level – Programs: Electrical, Robotics, Trade Skills, Esthetics | 1. Should have Parent Teacher Conferences in Middle School and High School |
|  | 1. Technology Application– at MS/ HS level many teachers don’t know what the students see on applications such as Canvas, access to text via web, etc. |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 7**

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| 1. Diversity | 1. Involvement from a variety of parents and stakeholders. |
| 1. Community support/ variety of events in and out of schools | 1. Time of day for school events hindering parent involvement |
| 1. Academic and extracurricular activities | 1. Publicizing additional programs available at the middle school and high school levels for parents potentially deciding about keeping their students in LPS |
| 1. Building renovation, incorporation of technology | 1. Lack of staff vacancies |
| 1. Availability of programs, G&T, Title 1, remedial reading, tutoring, etc. | 1. Class sizes |
| 1. Professional Development for staff | 1. Space in the building |
| 1. Increased security | 1. Student mobility, transient population of students |
| 1. Facility and school upgrades | 1. Attendance of staff and students |
| 1. Dedicated staff members | 1. Graduation rates, keeping students enrolled in school and working toward graduation. |
| 1. Access to resources | 1. Overall communication to families, stakeholders |

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| **Strengths** | **Challenges** |

**TABLE 8**

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| 1. Dual Enrollment | 1. Need community and warm inviting environment at secondary and high schools. |
| 1. IB Program | 1. Parental involvement |
| 1. Warm inviting community environment in the elementary schools. | 1. No Parent Teacher Conferences at the high school level |
| 1. Diversity | 1. Parents are not checking Genesis or opening their emails. |
| 1. County Resources | 1. Parents feels overwhelmed by the different communication or instruction platforms |
| 1. Learning Development and Training   Professional Development | 1. Need continuity of parent communication platform (like Class Dojo) Parents need to connect to this kind of platform in central registration. |
|  | 1. Discipline issues, social media, parents and kids dealing with trauma |
|  | 1. Need County Resources in different languages |
|  | 1. Classroom management training |
|  | 1. Parents backing the teachers. Teacher shortages. |
|  | 1. Space for new students coming in. |
|  | 1. Need bussing/transportation for students in the After School Program. |

**SUMMARY**

Each group reported to the large group their list of strengths and challenges. The following common themes were determined.

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| Strengths | Challenges |
| Commitment and Dedication of Staff | Decreased Graduation Rate / Test Scores |
| Diversity | Aging Facilities and Available Space |
| Use of Technology in Education and to Engage Stakeholders | Parental Involvement |
| Facility Upgrades | Attracting & Retaining Certificated Staff |
| IB Program, Academic and Extracurricular Offerings | Changing Population / Needs of MLL Students |
| Increased Security Measures | Student Absenteeism |

**Next Meeting: November 12, 2024 @ 6pm**

**Thank you for your commitment to Linden Public Schools!**

**We hope to see you there—attend with a friend!**

