



Creating a Strategic Plan for the Verona Public Schools

Mission Statement

In partnership with a supportive community, we inspire our students to be creative, critical thinkers and compassionate global citizens through dynamic teaching, meaningful curricula, and enriching experiences.

Session 1 of 3 - What are the Strengths and Challenges/Opportunities of the Verona Public Schools

On March 1, 2023 Verona Public Schools administrators, staff, Board members, parents, students, and community members came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening's topic focused on the strengths and challenges/opportunities of the Verona Public Schools to help inform the question of where the district is now.

Superintendent Diane DiGiuseppe provided an informative overview of the district. Charlene Peterson, from New Jersey School Boards Association, introduced the strategic planning process and facilitated the small group work.

The participants gathered into four mixed stakeholder groups to brainstorm the strengths and challenges/opportunities of the Verona Public Schools. After discussion, each group came to a consensus on up to top 10 strengths and top 10 challenges/opportunities and presented those to the full group of meeting participants.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. All consensus points may be posted on the district's website.

Work of the Small Groups:

Group 1	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES
Academics	Technology (elementary)
Extras – Band, Theater, Athletics	Gifted & Talented
Art – K-12	Elementary clubs
Peer Leadership	HBW peer leadership
Special Education	P. D. for specialists
Partnership with township	Vo-tech opportunities
DEI work	Electives for special education
Competition Clubs – DECA, Fed/Euro, Mock Trial	Increase preschool capacity
Community Involvement ↔	Community involvement
Holistic Student Growth – mind, body, spirit ↔	Holistic Student Growth – mind, body, spirit
	Global opportunities
	Teacher Wellness

Group 2	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES
Athletics/extra-curricular	Time and money
Student:Teacher ratio	“the best”
High-quality teaching staff	Mental health
Professional development	Teacher wellness
Community	Counseling (role & culture)
Our students	DEI
No barriers to course entry	SEL & Student Achievement (interconnected)
	Intervention/RTI
	Communication
	Non-traditional pathways

Group 3	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES
Staff – Quality and engaged staff; teaching with specialized degrees	Staff – hiring, retention; utilizing specialized staff better
We do much with a little	Communication – providing info earlier, e.g., 8 th grade to VHS in early fall.
Culture – Community Pride ↔	Culture – Community engagement. Finding a space for this community engagement
	Student Retention (perhaps college counselor in HS) & increase in student body in the next few years.

Group 4	
STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES
Staff	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Community	Staffing crisis
# of programs in a small district	Mental health
Student-centered focus	Space
Police/DPW Connection	Time
Increase of mental health services	Website
Professional development	
Customer service focus	

The second strategic planning session is scheduled for: Wednesday, March 15 at 7:00 pm. During the March 15th meeting, using a similar brainstorming process, we will identify our visions for the Verona Public Schools five years from now. The final meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 5 at 7:00 pm to write goal statements using the input from the two previous sessions.

Please join us. Everyone is welcome, even if you were not able to attend the first meeting. We look forward to seeing you!