



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New Haven Board of Education Strategic Planning Minutes

Friday, May 17, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Hillhouse Fieldhouse, 480 Sherman Parkway, New Haven, CT 06551

Morning Session

Presenters: Dr. Francis Barnes and Ann Borthwick

Session Objectives:

Complete a draft context and draft vision for each priority area.

Group Norms

- Respect each other's ideas
- Remain open-minded
- If misspeaks occur, ask for clarification while in the room
- Turn all cell phones and pagers off
- Refrain from sidebar conversations
- Observe the schedule (start times, breaks)
- Participate actively and fully
- Assume good intentions
- Expect and accept non-closure at the end of each session

Welcome by Dr. Tracey

Dr. Tracey welcomed the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and expressed gratitude for their participation and work. She encouraged the committee to remain committed to the work as they focus their energies on the continuous improvement effort.

1. The session commenced with the National Institute of School Leadership presenter, Ann Borthwick, who reviewed the work the SPC begun during Thursday's session. The agenda for the day and the group norms were reviewed. The group was encouraged to complete the draft contexts and visions for each priority area to ensure they would be prepared to share with additional stakeholders prior to Session 3, which will be held on June 10, 2019.

2. Group members from each of the following priority areas presented their draft context and vision:

- **Organizational efficiencies and effectiveness.**

Old vision: “We will allocate resources (time, talent, funds) strategically and successfully to be used for instructional and operational purposes.”

New vision: In New Haven Public Schools, to improve learning for students and do our share toward _____the instructional core, we need systems to protect time, talent, and funds. This is what we will do to save time, cultivate talents, and better use funds.

- We expect that every dollar and every hour is well used and can be tied to tangible and well-understood outcomes that can be upheld by our core values.
- Systems in place to protect the time of stakeholders so that there can be efficiency in operations and teaching and learning.
- New Haven Public Schools and stakeholders will agree on shared agreements in how to trust, learn, and grow in understanding of the budget process.
- New Haven Public Schools will develop right sized departments expanding and reducing debts based on understanding of the cost saving of possibly increasing staffing and the cost saving of possibly decreasing staffing
- New Haven Public Schools will target 5 areas to create systems to increase organizational efficiencies.

New Haven Public Schools will educate all stakeholders on their role to understand how their actions contribute positively to negatively using time, funds, and talent.

Context:

- Perception of organizational efficiency
- Perception that there is not a careful process in place to determine the effectiveness of existing programs / consultants to determine if they are cost-effective
- No balanced budget (expenses don't match revenues)
- No future planning in regards to budget
- No Chief Financial Officer
- No clear understanding of how funds are allocated in schools
- Website needs updating
- There may be areas that are not getting funding. Is there a process that uncovers areas that are underfunded?
- The district does not have a culture of good intentions.

- Knowledge is a limitation, difficult to get the full picture (how can we feel that we have all the information we need to feel comfortable with the budget process and how can we trust the information that we get?)
- What is the process for determining if something worked well?
- An example of redefining contracts – people got paid to be able to articulate what they learned in all departments. Create a learning environment that counters that my facts are right. How do we move to being a learning organization in terms of finance?
- Do we want to invest the time to get the results that we want?
- Are we going for low hanging fruit, or are we getting to the real issues?
- Do all staff know their role in impacting changes in finances? Example: budget, curriculum, culture – do we know the impact of our decisions?
- Is there an Equity Group? An Equity Policy? Are we working with Equality rather than Equity?
- Are we throwing people at problems and band-aiding the solutions?
- What is the cost of manufacturing mediocrity?
- Should the district use consultants for capacity building? Have a better idea to understand what we gain out of these services.
- Do we know the cost associated with not having a unified team / Board?
- Organizational efficiencies – roles that will be defined and there will be policies and procedures

The SPC made the following comments in response to the work shared by the **Organizational efficiencies and effectiveness** priority group:

- One participant noted that one aspect of the work that seemed to be missing was a deeper planning function, so that budgetary issues are tackled proactively rather than reactively. (“It’s not just about spending the money wisely, but planning the spending more carefully. Don’t plan on the fly put plans in place ahead of time.”)
- Trust came up as an on-going issue. Ann Borthwick suggested that trust may well be an issue that needs to be addressed in each priority area’s vision and work, so that each group’s vision attends to issues of trust and culture. (“Trust, but verify!” Needs to be an aspect of evaluation/assessment.)

- **Culture and Climate Priority Area:**

The challenges surrounding the climate/culture of the district:

- High suspension rates across the district
- High chronic absenteeism
- 25.6% of residents live in poverty
- Lack of digital resources
- Lack of adequate housing

- Parenting supports / skill set: breaking the cycle of distrust
- Lack of student engagement / ownership of learning
- Increased exposure to trauma
- Cultural responsiveness – language barriers
- Development appropriateness
- Welcoming schools/physical environment / school-wide practices and policies
 - welcoming staff – initiatives between schools
- Transient population
- Limited district office to support SEL work
- Professional development for teachers and staff is limited
- Limited opportunities to share best practices
- Opportunities / Resources for students in need
- Lack of coherence – clarity among all schools and district stakeholders
- Loss of human resources / staffing model
- Sustainability
- Model of current school structure (K-6 model, middle school model, limit range of ages)

Current initiatives, plans, and partnerships in place

- SEL curriculum—Michigan Model
- Code of Conduct being revised
- Youth Stat
- Community partners
- Increase of social work support in every schools
- Strategic Operating Planning Meeting
- School Planning and Management Teams

Vision: As a district, we believe in fostering a positive culture and climate in order to promote the development of the whole child.

- Promote health.
- Create welcoming environments within each of our schools
- Ensure equitable access to quality education that includes social and emotional learning in all schools
- Cultivate an understanding of cultural competencies
- Foster a system of communication where all voices are heard and valued
- Promote, recognize, and celebrate achievements of all stakeholders
- Maintain a climate of joy and inquiry that engages all learners

- **Family and Community Engagement Priority Area:**

Vision: In New Haven Public Schools, Family and Community Empowerment will be a collective effort to bring people together. We will embrace open communications, transparency, and equity to serve all students.

- We expect community partners will:

- Proactively engage with school initiatives and support various students' needs
- Communicate services and programs to school staff, students, and parents
- We expect parents will:
 - Assume the best intentions of educators
 - Play an active role in their child's education
 - Engage in creative, team-based problem-solving
- We expect New Haven Public Schools educators will:
 - Assume the best intentions of parents and families
 - Work collectively to create unique solutions for students

The SPC engaged in a spirited discussion regarding the most effective approach to utilize in identifying and addressing issues across all five priority areas. The following questions/thoughts surfaced during this discussion:

- How can each group look at root causes, not just anecdotal data, to be sure the SPC is addressing actual issues and problems?
- How do we ensure that this work continues forward so that this thinking doesn't just sit on a shelf and get revisited a year or two from now, with nothing meaningful happening as a result?
- There needs to be more than just what we expect of you, our partners, but here is what WE the district will do to facilitate and foster better communications and help you support your child.
- What does the research say about the effectiveness of parent engagement? What are the best practices?

3. Mission versus Vision

- The distinction between vision and mission was reiterated to the SPC, as there was some confusion among participants during the previous session:
 - Mission as purpose, why we exist
 - Vision as an image/picture/description of the desired end state of the planning process
 - Length is not the criteria; it should provide a roadmap as to where you intend to go.

4. The Sequence of Activity for the latter part of this session and Session 3 was shared with the SPC:

- Context and vision for each priority area
- Development of the NHPS District mission
- Development of the NHPS District vision – connecting the visions for each of the priority areas with the District's overall mission.

5. Each of the priority groups spent the rest of the morning working on fleshing out the context and refining their vision and mission statements.

Afternoon Session

6. After lunch, the priority area groups continued to work on their context and refining their vision and mission statements.
7. Each Priority Area group displayed their draft vision statements for the entire SPC to review and reflect upon:

- **Talent Management**

Vision: In New Haven Public Schools, Talent Management and Development, we will cultivate the professional life cycle of every person in our learning organization. We will attract, develop, recognize and retain talent. We will:

- Have a clear, integrated approach to a fair and transparent performance management and evaluation system based on clear criteria for all stakeholders in the learning organization.
- Empower all in the learning organization to improve their practice with high quality and job-embedded professional learning and development that is responsive to the educational needs of our students.
- Empower individuals to engage in an intentional career lattice which capitalizes and builds on individual's strengths and interests.
- Attract, recruit, and hire the best and brightest teachers, leaders, and support staff with expeditious timeliness from the recommendations to hire to the offer of employment.
- Utilize an integrated human capital management data system to efficiently and effectively support all in the learning organization.

- **Academics**

New Haven Public Schools requires high expectations and equitable outcomes so that every student will succeed in life and all future learning endeavors

- **Vision:** We want students to learn through authentic experiences, a personalized approach based on interests and strengths, cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally engaging instruction, a multi-tiered system of supports, and relevant experiences in which students can see themselves reflected in their educational communities
- We want New Haven Public Schools graduates to be people who are:
 - Productive global citizens who are compassionate about the people with whom they interact in the world
 - Pro-active advocates for self and others

- Flexible, resilient, and therefore adaptable to a variety of challenges
 - Multilingual with well-developed intercultural skills
 - Critical thinkers across academic disciplines
 - Literate in a broad range of academic disciplines, as well as finance, health, and technology.
- **Culture and Climate**

Vision: As a district, we believe in fostering a culture and climate that..... To cultivate this vision, we will have:

 - Health and wellness supports in place for all families and stakeholders
 - Welcoming environments within each of our schools and all district departments
 - Equitable access to quality education that includes social and emotional learning in all schools
 - Stakeholder collaboration to deepen our understanding of cultural competencies reflected in our changing communities.
 - A learning community where all voices are heard, valued, and respected.
 - Systems that promote, recognize, and celebrate achievements of all stakeholders
 - Innovative, purposeful, meaningful, and supporting thinking environments with high expectations that engage all learning through a growth mindset.
- **Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Vision: In New Haven Public Schools to improve for learning for New Haven Public Schools' students and do our share towards achieving the Instructional core, we need systems to...

 - We expect that all New Haven Public Schools employees will understand the cost to our schools, district, community, and nation and commit to doing their part in healthy whole child development
 - We will create and implement a transparent budget process that is site based to support the Instructional Core
 - We will align the District expenses to match the revenue in the current fiscal year....
 - We expect that every dollar and every hour is well used and can be tied to tangible and well-understood outcomes that can be upheld by our core values
 - We create systems to protect New Haven Public Schools staff's time so that there can be efficiency in operations and teaching and learning
 - We expect a process for decision-making such as district programs that require teachers and/or students to miss instruction, to include transparent criteria that measures the impact how the program impacts the instructional core
 - We expect staffing criteria centered on services to students and families

- We enhance, streamline, and optimize administrative processes and internal controls to improve efficiency, accountability, compliance and cost-effectiveness
- We evaluate and implement program consolidation(s) and efficiencies where feasible and prudent

- **Parent and Community Empowerment**

Vision: New Haven Public Schools will enhance a welcoming environment undergirded by trust, respect, and collaboration where families are considered equal partners amongst all stakeholders. We will develop and use systems, structures, procedures, and policies to foster constructive parent relationships, using various forms of communication (digital communications) to inform and engage families and the community in the decision-making process and practices that ultimately promote student success.

8. Next Steps for the SPC:

- The SPC members will share the draft context and vision with other stakeholders who priority group members represent. SPC members were encouraged to think about available opportunities to share their vision and to prepare to utilize those opportunities.
- Members were directed to confer with fellow priority area team members to share the feedback gleaned from their consultations with additional stakeholders. They were given autonomy regarding how and when to confer. Priority Area group members were also encouraged to refine their vision statements, as needed, in response to feedback received and their own reflections. The updated context and vision statements should be emailed to Dr. Tracey by noon June 8, 2019.

9. The agenda for Session 3 was shared with the SPC

- Context and vision for each priority area
- District Mission
- District Vision – connecting the visions for each priority area with the District's mission
- Establish your theory of action to achieve your vision with each of the priority areas

10. The session adjourned with Dr. Birks expressing thanks to the SPC members for sharing their intellectual capital and for their hard work and contribution to this endeavor.