Long Branch Public Schools
Strategic Plan

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Strategic Planning Process

| **PHASE I:** Engage	**PHASE II:** Focus	**PHASE III:** Execute

Document the current state of realty and the desired future position of the District.

➢ Conducted 9 Board of Education and 14 Administrator structured, individual interviews.
➢ Conducted 15 focus groups with key stakeholder populations (370+ participants).
➢ Reviewed mission and vision of the district.
➢ Reviewed archival data and reports provided by the district.
➢ Administered surveys of key stakeholder populations (1,224 respondents).
➢ Discussed research and best practice around emerging themes from the Engage phase.
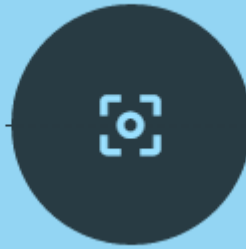
Create a framework for broad direction and priorities for the future in a formal strategic plan document.

➢ Reviewed Stakeholder feedback and themes from Engagement sessions.
➢ Documented mission and vision, and the future direction desired by stakeholders.
➢ Initiate discussion regarding Portrait of a Graduate
➢ Developed a draft strategic plan document to serve as a broad outline to guide the future direction of the district. The strategic plan contains:
  o Mission and Vision
  o Global Findings
  o Strategic Goals & Objectives Identified & Prioritized
  o Two-year Action Plans

Document specific steps that will be taken in order to accomplish the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan.

➢ Facilitated administrator planning meetings to guide implementation.

➢ Initial Biennial Goals & Plans.

➢ Identified metrics for monitoring progress.

➢ Executive Summary.

Global Findings

The survey responses, along with the participation in the interviews and the focus groups, are strong indicators of the support that the community, parents and staff demonstrate for the school district.

DATA	PERCEPTIONS
District Demographic Overview	BOE & Administration Interviews (9 + 14 = 23)
Finance (Personnel/Organizational) Overview	Focus Groups (15; 370+ participants)
Assessments Scores Overview	Online Survey Results (1,224)
Facilities & Technology Overview	

Research & Articles

The consultant team based its findings upon themes that emerged from stakeholder and focus group meetings, individual interviews and on input gathered from the survey. The consultants also reviewed enrollment trends, student performance data, the district's 2020 CAFRA Report, technology plan and infrastructure, finance and facilities, personnel levels and the organizational chart. From the perceptions and actual data, it was clear that both the external stakeholders and internal stakeholders place a high value on the quality and reputation of the educational programs and on the students, who are served through the school district. There is a strong sense of community support, pride and expectations for the school district and students. There appeared to be both a need and desire to celebrate individual successes and/or accomplishments as related to both the students and staff.

There is a commitment to addressing and supporting basic skills and student social and emotional learning for each student. In particular, parents recognized the challenges related to learning loss and social and emotional adjustment that will be required as a result of the limitations placed on the way teaching and learning had to occur during the pandemic. There is clearly a commitment by all stakeholders to reach students where they are and to level the playing field for all students regardless of background or challenges. There were also comments from parents and some stakeholders who believed that the needs of students in the middle are not being fully addressed. To this end, there is a common belief and commitment by stakeholders that "Together We Can" meet and address these challenges.

Financial and facilities support and needs revealed that the district operates with fiscal fidelity and that facilities are well maintained. It is noted that some of the facilities may not necessarily be suited to the expansion of experiential learning such as trade and technical programs that may be pursued by the Programs, Pathways and Proficiency action team to implement the district vision.

Expenditures, student performance and operating practices were also examined and compared with other New Jersey K-12 school districts with 3,500 or more students. The data, perception information, the examination of district resources and

enrollment trends, was shared with the advisory committee. This information was used by the committee to review and revise the district mission, to develop a district vision and to review and prioritize goals and objectives.

As part of the process to analyze both perceptions and the data collected, the consultants identified overreaching strengths (S), challenges (C), opportunities (O) and threats (T) to the district and the belief that the district will continue on a path from good to greater.

The SCOT analysis revealed that the diversity of the community and the community itself are probably the single most overreaching strength of the district along with financial stability, resources, district pride and the commitment of staff and teachers. Challenges included the movement of all children to proficiency at grade level, parental involvement in helping their children to get to the next level, addressing the basic skill level of each student, and Long Branch pride versus the reputation outside of the community. Opportunities identified included building on the new collaborative communication culture birthed in the pandemic for both internal and external stakeholders and building on the new culture of "Together We Can." Other opportunities included expansion and development of programs to provide academic, life and character skills for all LBPS students. Threats identified included defining the new norm, identifying student academic and mental health needs in a timely manner and the perception of inconsistencies across schools.

The complete list of strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats based on the analysis performed by the consultants follows.

Overarching Strengths of the District

- Diversity. Diversity. Diversity.
- Acceptance. Acceptance. Acceptance.
- Long Branch Pride: Tight knit community.
- A community that cares.
- Dedicated Team: Teachers, Support Staff and Administrators
    - "Super Supporters"
    - "Go To" for resource direction
- Support programs available to students, caregivers and families
- Current Financial Stability
- Technology Infrastructure
    - One-2-One Technology
    - Security
    - Fiber
- Facilities/Buildings
- Ability to analyze data to make curricular and instructional decisions
    - District level analysis
    - Student level analysis
- Home-grown leadership
- Student Voice opportunities
- Early Childhood Center
- Social Justice High School Program
- Performing Arts Program
- Partnerships
    - University/Colleges
    - Library
    - Town Leadership

Overarching Challenges

- ➤ "Parent involvement"
  - o Multiple definitions | Multiple expectations – varies by stakeholder
  - o Increase understanding of role in each child's educational journey
  - o Education of parents/guardians (ESL, etc.)
  - o Consistent and transparent communication to ALL parents
  - o PTA/PTO
- ➤ Move ALL children to academic proficiency at grade level
  - o ESL Community
  - o Covid Learning Loss
- ➤ Defining the "new normal" (re-entry)
  - o Implementing the "new norm"
  - o Educating/reeducating students AND parents/guardians as to expectations
    - ▪ Communication
    - ▪ Behavior
- ➤ Healing process of families as a result of pandemic (re-entry)
- ➤ Identifying individual mental and academic state (learning loss) of ALL students (re-entry)
- ➤ Providing or moving towards a more "individualized" or "personalized" educational experience to address equity and the individual needs, skill sets and passions of students.
- ➤ Addressing "basic skills" of students
  - o Individual identification along a spectrum and appropriate for age group
- ➤ Long Branch Pride vs. Reputation outside of community
- ➤ Communication across diverse groups and languages

Overarching Threats

- ➤ Relapse of pandemic lockdown either partial or total
- ➤ Community and caregivers lack of confidence in a safe learning environment to return to face-2-face instruction (re-entry)
- ➤ Ability to define "new norm" and communicate across district effectively for the start of 2021-22 school year (re-entry)
- ➤ Ability to identify individual student academic and mental health needs fast enough (re-entry)
- ➤ Ability to resource and address identified academic and mental health needs in a timely manner (re-entry)
  - o Hire and onboard anticipated staffing needs
  - o Implement policies, procedures, protocols and systems to efficiently and effectively provide needed resources & services
- ➤ Students' dependency on "support" after graduation: "super support stops"
- ➤ Perception that students are "pushed" through education system without mastering skills and concepts
- ➤ Perception of equitable and inconsistent opportunities across schools, grades, and programs

Overarching Opportunities

- ➢ Build on new collaborative communication culture birthed in pandemic: internal and external
    - o Internal – further build on cross department, school, grade, content and platforms
    - o External – Enhance communication plan with focus on community
    - o External – Educate community as to communication plans
- ➢ Partnerships and programs that provide articulated "next steps" for LBPS graduates
    - o Increase focus on transition and preparedness for life after high school regardless of the chosen pathway in career, military or trade
- ➢ Build on new culture: "Together We Can;" fall forward; it's "ok" to make a mistake
- ➢ Programs that provide academic, life and character skills for LBPS graduates:
    - o Integration of experiential and individual learning experiences and programs designed for academic, social and life success
- ➢ New leadership team in conjunction with pandemic slowdown
- ➢ Revisit/reestablish PTO/PTA
- ➢ Partnerships with local and corporate businesses that provide extracurricular opportunities, project-based curriculum and mentorships
    - o Increase extracurricular programs for middle and high school (afterschool and summer)
- ➢ Continue to challenge approach to education delivery system
    - o F-2F | Hybrid | Remote | Experiential

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a statement of the overall purpose of an organization. The mission should say what you do, for whom you do it, and the benefit.

Mission Statement

Committed to celebrating diversity and embracing uniqueness, the LBPS family strives to educate, develop and support every student to become successful community members in a rapidly changing world.

VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement is a statement reflects the district's preferred future. Vision statements describe how the future will look if the organization achieves its ultimate aims.

Vision Statement

LBPS seeks to empower our students socially, emotionally, and academically for life and career in an inclusive, dynamic and innovative learning environment from PreK thru 12th grade and beyond.

Strategic Goals

Generally, the mission of an organization does not change, but may be restated. On the other hand, the vision, because it reflects where an organization wants to be in three, five, seven or even ten years may change. Goals to reach the vision are usually crafted in biennial two-year segments with quarterly reviews and adjustments, annual assessments and modifications. Usually the goals are prioritized, and the highest priority goals are included in the first two-year plan. The focal point of this advisory committee was on seven target priority areas.

The seven major areas that surfaced as potential categories for both short and long-range goals and/or objectives are as follows:

- Social & Emotional Learning
- Programs, Pathways & Proficiency
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)
- Communication
- Student Life | Life Skills
- Portrait of a Graduate

- Defining the New Norm

It was determined by the consultants and agreed upon by the advisory committee that finance, facilities and personnel were not perceived as target areas needing focus at this juncture. Finance, facilities and personnel would be addressed across and within each action plan. Additionally, during the course of action plan development, the goals identified under the Defining the New Norm category were incorporated and addressed by the Social & Emotional Learning action team.

The goal setting process follows.

Social & Emotional Learning

- ➢ Acknowledge and assess healing and support of community as a result of crises
- ➢ Identify individual mental and academic state of ALL students
- ➢ Increase student voice in their educational journey
- ➢ Identify and integrate programs to assess and address student, family, and staff stress and anxiety
  - o Covid/pandemic aftermath
  - o Academic anxiety
  - o Economic anxiety
  - o Other causes of anxiety and stress impacting student & staff performances and family support
  - o Train/hire team
  - o Educate and promote program(s) to stakeholders and potential recipients

Programs, Pathways & Proficiency

➢ Programs that provide academic, life and character skills for LBPS graduates
  o Integrate experiential, individualized, and personalized learning experiences and programs designed for academic, social and life success
➢ Partnerships and programs that provide articulated "next steps" for LBPS graduates
  o Increase focus on transition and preparedness for life after high school regardless of the chosen pathway in college, trades or military
➢ Move ALL children to academic proficiency at grade level
  o ESL Community
  o Covid Leaning Loss
➢ Address "basic skills" of students
  o Individual identification along a spectrum and appropriate for age group based on where they are
➢ Partnerships with local and corporate businesses that provide project-based curriculum projects and mentorships

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

➢ Expand integration of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts into district culture
➢ Increase integration of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts into curriculum
➢ Communicate district-wide DEI program throughout and across district and community
➢ Develop and implement measurement tools to assess progress and implementation of DEI programs, policies and procedures

Communications

➢ Development and implementation of comprehensive communication plan
  o Identify platforms/communication vehicles consistent across schools and departments to parents and caregivers
    ▪ Explain, educate and train all staff members
    ▪ Educate parents & caregivers as to plan
  o Build on existing internal communication across department, school, grade, and content areas
  o Communicate plan to community stakeholders.
    ▪ What do they need to know?
    ▪ Where do they go to access information?
➢ Ensure communication across diverse groups and languages
➢ Unpack and define the use of the term "parent involvement" in LBPS
  o Multiple definitions | Multiple expectations
➢ Reestablish/revisit parent/teacher organizations (PTO/PTA)
➢ Further involve parents in student's educational journey
  o Increase understanding of their role in child's education career
  o Education of parents (ESL, etc.)
  o Consistent and transparent communication to ALL parents/guardian
➢ Branding: Communicate district culture of "Together We Can"
  o Include "It's ok to fall forward"
  o Capitalize on Long Branch Pride
  o Work on reputation of district outside of community

Student Life | Life Skills

- ➢ Address "basic skills" of students
    - o Individual identification along a spectrum and appropriate for age group based on where they are
- ➢ Expand middle and high school after school programs
- ➢ Expand middle and high school summer programs
- ➢ Increase student voice and choice in their education journey
- ➢ Establish and/or further develop partnerships with local and corporate businesses that provide extracurricular opportunities and mentorships for PreK-12 students and beyond.
    - o Ask students what they want

Portrait of a Graduate

- ➢ Refine definitions of Portrait of a Graduate Characteristics/Competencies
- ➢ Ensure communication of the LBPS Portrait of a Graduate to stakeholders
    - o Develop graphic to assist with communication
- ➢ Ensure Portrait of a Graduate Characteristics/Competencies are incorporated at each grade level

Top Priority Goals

The following goals are the top priority goals by category identified and revisited by the Action Teams.

Social & Emotional Learning

- ➢ Acknowledge and assess healing and support of community as a result of crises
- ➢ Identify and integrate programs to assess and address student, family, and staff stress and anxiety
  - o Covid/pandemic aftermath
  - o Academic anxiety
  - o Economic anxiety
  - o Other causes of anxiety and stress impacting student & staff performances and family support
  - o Train/hire team
  - o Educate and promote program(s) to stakeholders and potential recipients

Programs, Pathways & Proficiency

- ➢ Programs that provide academic, life and character skills for LBPS graduates
  - o Integrate experiential, individualized, and personalized learning experiences and programs designed for academic, social and life success
- ➢ Partnerships and programs that provide articulated "next steps" for LBPS graduates
  - o Increase focus on transition and preparedness for life after high school regardless of the chosen pathway in college, trades or military

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

➢ Expand integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts into district culture
➢ Increase integration of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts into curriculum
➢ Develop and implement measurement tools to assess progress and implementation of DEI programs, policies, and procedures

Communications

➢ Development and implementation of comprehensive communication plan
  o Identify platforms/communication vehicles consistent across schools and departments to parents and caregivers
    ▪ Explain, educate and train all staff members
    ▪ Educate parents & caregivers as to plan
  o Build on existing internal communication across department, school, grade, and content areas
  o Communicate plan to community stakeholders.
    ▪ What do they need to know?
    ▪ Where do they go to access information?
➢ Further involve parents in student's educational journey
  o Increase understanding of their role in child's education career
  o Education of parents (ESL, etc.)
  o Consistent and transparent communication to ALL parents/guardian

Student Life | Life Skills

- ➤ Address "basic skills" of students
  - o Individual identification along a spectrum and appropriate for age group based on where they are
- ➤ Increase student voice and choice in their education journey
- ➤ Establish and/or further develop partnerships with local and corporate businesses that provide extracurricular opportunities and mentorships for PreK-12 students and beyond.
  - o Ask students what they want

Portrait of a Graduate

- ➤ Refine definitions of Portrait of a Graduate Characteristics/Competencies
- ➤ Ensure Portrait of a Graduate Characteristics/Competencies are incorporated at each grade level