UPPER SADDLE RIVER

Creating a Strategic Plan
For Upper Saddle River School District

Mission Statement

"The mission of the Upper Saddle River School District is to develop in each student, intellectual, artistic, physical, and practical skills and knowledge; to allow each of them to have a strong sense of achievement and pride; to develop a life long love of learning; and to work well independently and as part of a team.

It is the expectation of this school district that all students achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade levels."

Meeting # 2 of 3

What is our Vision for the Upper Saddle River School District for the next 3-5 years? What Expectations and Initiatives do we believe in?

On March 27, 2014, Upper Saddle River School District Administration, Board of Education Members, staff, parents and community members came together to continue strategic planning. The second evening topic was focused on creating a "shared vision" for the Upper Saddle River School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board President, **Ms. Catherine Smiechowski**. NJSBA Field Services Representatives, **Al Annunziata** and **Robynn Meehan** provided an overview of meeting one – the identification of district strengths/accomplishments and challenges. After an introduction into visioning process, the facilitators outlined an exercise. The idea was- if you had moved away from the district and returned five years later only to find the Upper

Saddle River School District was on the cover of *Time* magazine as "Schools that Succeed." Approximately 32 participant stakeholders then gathered in randomly assigned groups to brainstorm what the district did to achieve this remarkable success. Each group came to consensus on the characteristics, elements and opportunities that will define the future Upper Saddle River School District.

After discussion, each group identified their consensus vision and presented them to all meeting participants. The session concluded with the recognition of common threads throughout the groups' visions and the assimilation into four broad goal areas for the next meeting.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district's website to share the work of the groups with the larger community during the course of the strategic planning process.

Group Consensus - "Our Visions for the Future"

Green Team:

- ➢ **Characteristics-**
    - o **Virtual learning**
    - o **High test scores- but define our own successes and not someone else's**
    - o **Global community - interest based learning**
    - o **Managing pressure**
    - o **Community based projects**
    - o **No state testing**
    - o **Innovation and value opportunity**
    - o **Continual learning (yearlong)**
    - o **Consistent time based on learning as a priority**
  - **U- uninterrupted learning**
  - **S- student centered**
  - **R- reaching potential for all**
    - o **Out of the box thinkers - creating reactions**
    - o **Independent, responsible learners at the center**
    - o **BLENDED learning – combine classroom and home and online learning**
    - o **Civics - importance of global awareness**
    - o **Shift in values (reality TV) decipher opinion from facts - media literacy**
    - o **Having initiative, ahead of the curve**

Red Team:

- ➢ **Time magazine cover: "The District Everyone Else Wants to Be"**
  - o **Cavallini-Middle School: 8th graders win Oscar for ground breaking documentary - filmed only on an iPad!**
  - o **Bogert Elementary School: 5th graders win Nobel peace prize for negotiating Peace on Earth**
  - o **Reynolds Elementary School: 1st graders find cure for cancer**
  - o **USR - Students grow up happy, fulfilled and successful**
  - o **It all started in USR!**
- ➢ **Preparing for success – however they define it!**
- ➢ **Student accomplishments and successes (college/university, college ready)**
- ➢ **Manage enrollments fluctuation - forward thinking**
- ➢ **Process rather than outcomes**
- ➢ **USR - where everyone wants to be**
- ➢ **Good character and citizenship/social conscience**
- ➢ **Special education not needed, because they will create learning to fit the child not the reverse**
- ➢ **Technology**
- ➢ **Inductive rather than reductive**
- ➢ **Training vs educating**
- ➢ **All year school, but not all in the classroom, technology everywhere**
- ➢ **Self- motivated, self-confident, self-reliant students, perseverance**
- ➢ **Values diversity - student have strong sense of self**
- ➢ **Well-rounded education, exposure to many experiences**
- ➢ **Fiscally sound**
- ➢ **Global awareness and connections**
- ➢ **Utilizing technology to transform learning**
- ➢ **Authentically measuring student progress**
- ➢ **Figure out what a child really learns and how much they actually know**
- ➢ **Student led learning - students are producers, teachers-problem based learning-real world**

Orange Team:

- **What are the remote learning opportunities?**
  - **Leverage technology to provide greater breath of curriculum**
  - **No missed days of school**
  - **Maximizing student and faculty use of available technology**
  - **Intuitive use of technology - not process oriented**
- **Environment that applauds courageous risk taking - open to new approaches**
- **Encourage faculty innovation**
- **Self-inquisitive faculty - students teaching teachers**
- **New approaches - using technology in every way**
- **Flexibility in Classroom Model**
- **Leverage the expertise of the Community and members**
- **Tap into talents of Community**
- **Utilize connections to Community professional opportunities**
- **Bilingual**
- **Emotionally intelligent**
- **Citizens of the world - "Good People"**
- **Ability to flex and respond to adversity**
- **Love of creativity and the arts**
- **Diversity**
- **Creativity - encourage the arts - explore different activities**
- **Focus on physical health**
- **Inclusion model for special education**
- **Strong writers**

Common Threads:

After the individual groups reported their visions, the following common threads were identified that connected all of the groups' work.

- **Community/connections/communication**
- **Student Achievement and success**
- **Personalized learning**
- **Innovate**
- **Student driven learning**
- **Technology – as a vehicle integrated into all areas**
- **Student attributes: resilient; perseverance; good character; healthy; emotional intelligence; creative; responsible; good citizens; globally aware; respect diversity; motivated; self-confident; life long learners**

Broad Goal Areas:

The four goal areas for the next session that emerged from the groups' work are:

1. **Student Achievement**
2. **Community/Communication**
3. **Student Character Traits for the 21st Century**
4. **Instructional Configurations (creative and flexible)**

The third and final strategic planning session is scheduled for:

Thursday, May 1 at 7:00pm at **Cavallini Middle School Media Center**.

Meetings are scheduled for 1.5 hours and end promptly to respect our participants' time.

During the next meeting we will:
- Develop a broad goal statement for each of the 4 identified goal areas
- Develop objectives for each goal area based on the information derived from the previous group work in sessions 1 and 2.

Please join us even if you have not attended previous meetings. Everyone is welcome. We look forward to seeing you!

RSVP by contacting the district office, **Ms. Sandy Kreger** at **201-961-6502**.