



FRANKLIN BOROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

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Executive Summary of the Strategic Planning Process

The Franklin Borough Elementary School District provides a high-quality education for students in grades PK-8 in the Borough of Franklin, in Sussex County NJ. Honoring the Borough's solid sense of tradition and history, and fully vested in providing a 21st-century education for its students, the Borough's Board of Education is committed to providing the best educational program that its resources allow.

In 2019, the District created, with community input, its first five-year Strategic Plan. The District's and Board's annual goals were based on the Goals and Objectives delineated in the Plan throughout its lifespan.

With the Plan set to mature at the end of 2023, the Board and Administration endeavored to renew its Strategic Plan using the same methodology as in 2019. The renewal process would address the following questions:

- What is our collective vision for providing the very best educational experience for our students?
- What is the experience that our school provides for our students today?
- How will we heighten the student experience in the long term, and what steps should we be taking to get there?

Franklin Borough Elementary School District

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Goal Areas

1. Educational Program
2. Health and Wellness
3. Facilities

The Board contracted with Kathleen Helewa of Kathleen Educational Consultants, LLC to lead three interactive meetings, open to the public and all interested school stakeholders, to engage with members of the school board and Superintendent Giacchi to create a draft framework for the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. The draft work was refined into a final document, presented to the Board in the Fall of 2023 for final approval.

Post approval, The Franklin Borough Board of Education shall approve annual District and Board Goals based upon the Strategic Plan. The Superintendent and school administrative team will create action plans annually to support those goals, and the goals and objectives of the Plan for the next five years.

First Goal: Educational Program

Goal Statement: Maintain a well-rounded program of studies that meets the needs and interest of all learners so each student can reach their full potential.

Objectives:

1. Provide a rigorous and meaningful academic program that is aligned to the NJSLS and the needs of students.
2. Provide opportunities for students that promote academic, social and emotional growth.
3. Collaborate with community partners to provide opportunities to expose students to life skills that promote future success.

Second Goal: Health and Wellness

Goal Statement: Further develop a school-wide culture of wellness that supports the education of the Whole Child and prepares students for a successful future.

Objectives:

1. Offer a variety of opportunities and programming to develop age-appropriate social skills across all grade levels.
2. Provide high-quality professional development for staff to support best practices in sustaining a culture of wellness for students.
3. Provide opportunities for parents to be active partners with the school in promoting a culture of wellness for students both in school and at home.

Third Goal: Facilities

Goal Statement: Ensure facilities continue to be safe, upgraded, and equipped with current technology to promote a conducive environment for learning and advancement.

Objectives:

1. Continually update campus security and safety.
2. Continually maintain innovative technology.
3. Proactively anticipate facility needs.



Franklin Borough School

**Strategic Plan
District Profile
September 20, 2023**

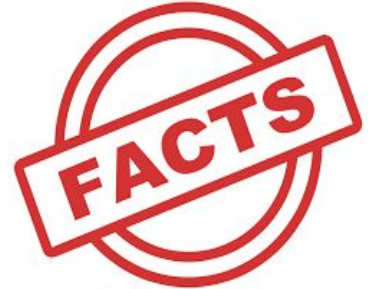
A Closer Look

- District Facts/Figures
- Demographics
- Programs
- Extracurricular Opportunities
- Facilities
- Progress made since 2018



Important Facts

- 109 years old
- One of the original high schools in Sussex County
- Preschool through 8th grade
- One building school district
- 9 member Board of Education
- Wallkill Valley Regional High School sending district



Demographics of the District

- Certified Staff: 62
- Non-certified and Support Staff: 59
- Special Education Population: 19.1%
- Students who qualify for the free or reduced meals program: 43.8%



Enrollment Trends

| School Year | Number of Students |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 2017-2018 | 444 |
| 2018-2019 | 462 |
| 2019-2020 | 464 |
| 2021-2022 | 476 |
| 2022-2023 | 490 |
| 2023-2024 | 507 |

General Education Academic Programs

- Math
- Language Arts
- Science
- Social Studies
- Spanish
- Health
- Physical Education
- Art
- Music
- Library
- STEM
- Universal Preschool



Program Resources

- School Wide Readers & Writers Workshop K-8
- Into Math K-8
- Science Dimensions K-8
- TCI History K-8
- Double Math Block K-8
- Advanced Track Math 6-8
- iReady Diagnostic/Adaptive Assessments K-8
- Chromebook One-to-One 1-8
- Professional Learning Communities
- Academic Support Periods
- Instrumental Music



Support /Enrichment Programs

- Resource Room
- Self-Contained (Language / Learning Disabilities)
- Self-Contained (Emotional Regulation Impairment)
- Adaptive Physical Education
- Speech / Language Services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Physical Therapy Services
- Gifted & Talented
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Math & Reading Intervention
- Counseling Services



Extracurricular Activities

- Soccer (Co-ed team)
- Basketball (Girls & Boys)
- Instrumental Band
- Chorus
- Battle of the Books
- Academic Bowl
- Girls On The Run
- Let's Run
- Teen Arts
- EmpowerU
- Franklinite Dancers
- Winter 4 Kids



- Field Hockey
- Cheerleading (co-ed team)
- Drama Club
- Yearbook
- Student Council
- Kindness Committee
- Homework Club
- Knitting Club
- National Junior Honor Society
- R.I.S.E.
- Big Brother Big Sisters

Parent and Community Support

- Educational Organizations

- PTO - Parent Teacher Organization
- SEPAG - Special Education Parent Advisory Group
- ECAC - Early Childhood Advisory Council

- Community partners

- Ginnie's House
- Project Self-Sufficiency
- Local Food Share
- Sussex County Food Pantry
- Center for Prevention & Counseling
- Zufall
- Atlantic Health System
- YMCA
- Wallkill Valley Coalition
- Lakeside Counseling
- Family Partners of Sussex and Morris
- Franklin Police Department
- Franklin Fire Department

Facilities

- **District Assessment of Facility Needs**

- Windows
- Paving
- Roof
- Bathrooms
- Masonry



2018-2023 Strategic Plan Highlights

GOAL AREA 1: Learning / Academics and the Whole Child

To further develop our program of studies to address academic standards and foster an interest in career development, so that any student can become a well-rounded member of society.

Objectives:

1. Continue to offer rigorous and diverse courses that promote academic achievement.
2. Incorporate vocational-awareness into existing programs.
3. Promote self-esteem and success at every level.

2018-2023 Strategic Plan Highlights

GOAL AREA 2: Health and Wellness of All

To create and foster an environment that promotes the overall health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff through positive learning experiences.

Objectives:

1. Develop programs that support student interests and creativity.
2. Create productive citizens through school-wide community service opportunities.
3. Create and enhance school-wide team-building exercises.
4. Develop professional development opportunities that promote positive mental health initiatives.
5. Increase parent participation in school initiatives.

2018-2023 Strategic Plan Highlights

GOAL AREA # 3: 21st-Century Campus

To continually improve the functionality of the school to encourage innovative thinkers.

Objectives:

1. Campus-wide re-examination and re-configuration to the layout.
2. Integrate art throughout the campus.
3. Continually update campus security and safety.
4. Provide global innovative technology.



Franklin Board of Education

Strategic Planning Update #1

Outcomes of the First Community Strategic Planning Session

The Franklin Borough Elementary School District's current five-year Strategic Plan will mature at the end of 2023. The Franklin Board of Education intends to approve a five-year Strategic Plan this fall, which will guide the Board's and Administration's decisions over the next five years. It is the desire of the Board and Superintendent John Giacchi that, following the process which was successfully utilized for its first foray into strategic planning, the new Strategic Plan shall be re-formed and renewed with community participation. Thus, the school announced and advertised that *all* Franklin Elementary School stakeholders are welcome to join in the process, which will be accomplished over three 90-minute evening meetings starting at 6:00pm at the school on September 20, October 5, and October 19, with educational leadership consultant Kathleen Helewa facilitating the sessions. As a result, twelve people attended the first meeting, including six FBOE members and six school community members, to work together on the new Strategic Plan.

We began the first session with an overview of the concept of a Strategic Plan and the process for creating one. By following a Strategic Plan, the Board and Administration will be able to allocate its resources to support the community's aspirations for the students of Franklin.

In order to create a Plan that is forward-thinking and can be aligned with the realities of the District, Franklin Borough School District's strategic planning process will address three questions:

1. What is the present state of the school district?
2. What is our vision for the future of the district?
3. What goals and objectives could we accomplish over the next five years to achieve our vision?

We focused on the first question during our first meeting. Superintendent Giacchi presented a comprehensive State of the District report. Franklin Elementary enjoys support from parent groups, such as its PTO, SEPAG (Special Education Parent Advisory Group) and Early Childhood Advisory Council; and community groups. Enrollment has increased by just over 14% over the last five years, from 444 to 507 students. The District currently has a high number of students with special needs (19.1%), and 43.8% of its pupils qualify for the free and reduced meals program. The District offers Universal Preschool, and includes Spanish, STEM, Library, Music, and Art in its general academic programming. A healthy amount of program resources (such as academic support periods, 1:1 Chromebooks for students, Readers & Writers Workshop), and a variety of support and enrichment programming (e.g., the Resource Room, a Gifted & Talented program, counseling, English as a Second Language) are available to Franklin Elementary School students. There are twelve different extra-curricular activities for students, seven of which were begun since the inception of the District's current Strategic Plan.



Mr. Giacchi led the group through the achievements the District has accomplished under the maturing Strategic Plan, which comprises three Goal Areas: (1) Learning / Academics and the Whole Child, (2) Health and Wellness of All, and (3) 21st-Century Campus. The Board of Education has been able to responsibly balance resources in a very challenging economic climate, while the District's needs are continually expanding. Recent District assessments indicate that pressing facility needs include windows, paving, roof, bathrooms, and masonry.

At the conclusion of the Superintendent's report, all participants then completed individual SWOT analyses of the school district. Participants completed the four sections of a **SWOT** in two-minute intervals for each category: **Strengths**, internal factors that have a positive outcome for the student experience and are completely under the District's control; **Weaknesses**, factors that could be improved to have a better outcome for the student experience and are wholly under the District's control; **Opportunities**, conditions which are coming from outside of the District but have or may have a positive impact on our students; and **Threats**, external factors and conditions over which the District has no control but which may harm our school or the students' experience in the District.

All participants, save Superintendent Mr. Giacchi, Business Administrator Barbara Decker, and Ms. Helewa, then split into two groups to share their individual analyses and to come up with a collective SWOT analysis for the group, coming to consensus on up to five bullet points for each category. The following are the small groups' SWOT reports, verbatim:

Group 1

Strengths:

- Budget / fiscal responsible
- Staff
- Communication
- Activities / support services
- Preschool

Weaknesses:

- Academic performance
- Parent participation
- Early intervention (academic)
- Franklin Borough involvement

Opportunities:

- Grant money
- Diversity
- Community services
- Borough involvement
- Drop off / pick up



Threats:

- Social media
- Mental health / broken families
- Town growth – new developments
- Parent participation
- Economic challenges

Group 2

Strengths:

- Building improvements
- Diverse amount of clubs
- Strong PTO
- Veteran teacher training / staff
- Utilize grants

Weaknesses:

- Communication – using our website, social media
- Lack of clubs for special education students or those that don't like sports
- Staff to student ratio for Special Ed / CST needs & general counselor
- Updated curriculum / How recent?
- Not enough STEAM / STEM
- Weak CST—Listening to parents wants and needs

Opportunities:

- Work closer with community
- Strong PTO
- Local history
- Utilize outside organizations to help school community

Threats:

- Better use of school building to assist the outside community. Be the “center”
- Social media
- Poor self-image of town

The work was shared with the large group of participants, where we noted commonalities of appreciation for staff, the fiscal responsibility of the Board, the importance & challenge of robust parental involvement, opportunities for community support, concerns for pervasive social media usage, and the realities of a challenging fiscal landscape.



Our work for the evening concluded with thanks to Mr. Giacchi and the Board for this opportunity to engage in purposeful and robust conversation about our school. The team will continue the work at our next session on October 5, during which we will delineate our long-term aspirations for our students.

Interested participants from all sectors of the school community who were not able to attend our first meeting are eagerly invited to join us at our second and third Strategic Planning sessions. Meetings begin in the school auditorium at 6pm and finish at 7:30pm. Light refreshments will be served.

[Come join us on Thursday, October 5, 6—7:30pm, Franklin School Auditorium!](#)

[We look forward to working with you!](#)





Franklin Board of Education

Strategic Planning Update #2

Outcomes of the Second Community Strategic Planning Session

The Franklin Borough Elementary School District's current five-year Strategic Plan will mature at the end of 2023. The Franklin Borough Board of Education intends to approve a five-year Strategic Plan this fall, which will guide the Board's and Administration's decisions over the next five years. It is the desire of the Board and Superintendent John Giacchi that, following the process which was successfully utilized for its first foray into strategic planning, the new Strategic Plan shall be re-formed and renewed with community participation over three evening meetings.

At the invitation of Superintendent Giacchi and the Franklin Borough Board of Education, members of the Franklin Elementary School community came together on the evening of October 5 for the second meeting of Strategic Planning. The meeting, which was open to all interested participants from the community, included school administrators, teachers, parents, leaders in the community, and school board members. Educational leadership consultant Ms. Kathleen Helewa facilitated the meeting.

We began the session with a recap of our first meeting, in which Superintendent Giacchi presented a State of the District report, and we subsequently completed SWOT analyses utilizing everyone's unique perspectives.

In an effort to bring in more stakeholder voices, the District made available an online SWOT survey, which was administered by Ms. Helewa. Examining the results of the SWOT surveys, we affirmed that the responses were mostly varied, with the greatest amount of commonalities appearing in the Strengths category. The Threats category, however, though also composed of many different data points, had a theme of concern and care for family life in the present day.

The focus for our session this evening was on defining a vision for our students. For guidance, we reviewed the Franklin Borough Board of Education's Mission Statement and Philosophy of Education, and the school's Mission Statement, the latter of which was written by students.

Franklin Borough Board of Education Philosophy of Education and Mission Statement

We believe that the Franklin Borough School staff must know each child, plan an appropriate program for each child, provide a wide variety of experiences to meet his/her needs, reveal and develop his/her gifts, and strengthen his/her self-confidence, and nurture in each child his/her zest for learning. It is the expectation of this school district that all pupils achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade levels.



Therefore, it is the mission of this school community to assist each child to the limit of his/her abilities:

1. To think
2. To use communication skills effectively
3. To become adept in the skills necessary to solve problems
4. To make intelligent choices, based on a growing set of moral values
5. To create and appreciate beauty in music, art, literature, and nature
6. To be healthy in body and mind, with wholesome feelings towards self and others
7. To contribute as a citizen, with a sense of loyalty, understanding and interest in his/her own land and the world at large.

Franklin School Mission Statement (Written by Students)

We, at Franklin School, will encourage ourselves to be respectful, honest, responsible throughout life, and help others to do the same.

All present had an overall positive view of the above, and believe that the Philosophy of Education, District Mission Statement, and School Mission Statement accurately reflect the guiding principles that define our school culture. Additionally, there is a wish that the Mission Statements and Philosophy become more aspirational, that they “reach higher” than the present language.

This was the perfect segueway for our small group work. We split into two groups. All were asked to define together a vision for the Franklin Borough School District—to envision what the student experience and school district would look like in five years’ time, with our new Strategic Plan (which we are currently building) having matured, and all of the aspirational goals and objectives contained therein having been fulfilled. Groups were asked to imagine accurately completing the following statements five years from now:

Franklin School students are _____

Franklin School graduates are _____

Franklin School is _____

Because _____

On the following page is the small groups’ work, in bold, verbatim.



Group 1

Franklin School students are **Balanced, Engaged, Curious, Excited, Fun, Engaged** [2x]

Franklin School graduates are **Successful, Confident, Kind, No Excuses**

Franklin School is **Solid—built on a strong foundation**

Because **Support given by and through BOE, Staff, PTO, Community, Parents**

Group 2

Franklin School students are **Resilient, Kind, Successful, Proud, Creativity, Scholars**

Franklin School graduates are **Proud, Leaders, Empowered, Passionate**

Franklin School is **A Community, Welcoming, Create a Sense of Belonging**

Because

- **We foster creativity**
- **We appreciate individuality**
- **We empower their passion**
- **We treat all with dignity**
- **We promote equity**
- **We strive for academic excellence**
- **We support the Whole Child**

The work of the small groups was shared to the larger group. The work resonated with all present.

Our last task for the evening was to determine the Goal Areas for our new Strategic Plan, which would support the visions articulated this evening while recognizing the outcomes of the SWOT exercises. The following Goal Areas were discussed and agreed upon by the large group:

- 1. Education**
- 2. Facilities**
- 3. Mental Health**

The meeting ended with thanks again to Superintendent Giacchi and the Board for a productive and meaningful session. The team will meet for a final time on Thursday, October 19 to write goal statements and supporting objectives for the Goal Areas we identified.

All interested participants from our school community who were not able to attend our prior meetings are enthusiastically invited to join us at our remaining session, which



will begin in the cafeteria at 6:00 pm and finish at 7:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served.

Thanks to all our school stakeholders for your dedication to the Franklin Borough School District! We are looking forward to an exciting conclusion of our Strategic Planning.

Come join us on Thursday, October 19, 6—7:30pm, Franklin School Auditorium for our final evening of Strategic Planning for our School!

We look forward to working with you—Bring a Friend!





Franklin Borough Board of Education

Strategic Planning Update #3

Outcomes of the Third Community Strategic Planning Session

At the invitation of Superintendent John Giacchi and the Franklin Borough Board of Education, members of the Franklin School community came together on the evening of October 19, 2023 for the third and final meeting of school district Strategic Planning. For three consecutive meetings, any interested participants from the school community were invited to participate in the process of forming a new, five-year Strategic Plan for the school district. A group of about ten participants came together for our final meeting, which included school administrators, teachers, parents, board members, and leaders from the community. Educational leadership consultant Ms. Kathleen Helewa facilitated each of the sessions.

We began the final evening with a recap of our work up until that point, which comprised the creation of SWOT analyses, an examination of the District's Mission Statements and Philosophy of Education / Core Beliefs, and articulating a vision for the school district. Building on that work, at the end of the second session, we determined three Goal Areas for the new Strategic Plan:

- 1. Education**
- 2. Facilities**
- 3. Mental Health**

Our final phase of work was to write broad, five-year draft Goal Statements and some draft supporting Objectives for each of the Goal Areas. We broke into small groups, one for each of the Goal Areas. The following is the work of the small groups, verbatim:

Education

Goal Statement: Develop a well-rounded program of studies with each student growth through motivation and merit.

Objectives:

1. Offer academics that offer STEAM and performance.
2. Develop extracurricular activities that encourages student achievement.
3. Tap into alumni to give students a vision of career and life paths.



Facilities

Goal Statement: Ensure school facilities continue to be safe, upgraded, and equipped with current technology to promote a conducive environment for learning and advancement.

Objectives:

1. Continually update campus security and safety
2. Continually maintain innovative technology
3. Proactively anticipate facility needs

Mental Health -- Suggested title change to Health and Wellness

Goal Statement: Further develop wellness programs that foster a strong student foundation to prepare them for a successful future

Objectives:

1. Develop social skills group groups at each age level
2. Provide professional training to all staff through external sources
3. Provide parent portal for activities and resources to keep parents engaged & supported.

All of the small groups' work was reported out to the larger group at the end of the evening.

Superintendent Giacchi will refine this work into a formal Strategic Plan with support from Ms. Helewa as needed. Ms. Helewa will prepare a Strategic Plan document for Board approval at the November 13, 2023 public Franklin Borough Board of Education meeting. Once the Plan is approved, Mr. Giacchi will create annual action plans for the Plan's objectives; these action plans will comprise action steps to bring the goals of the Strategic Plan to fruition. The Franklin Borough Board of Education will monitor Administration's progress on the action steps and the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan throughout its five-year lifespan.

Superintendent Giacchi finished the evening by offering sincere thanks to all who participated in the creation of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Helewa thanked Mr. Giacchi and the Franklin Borough Board of Education for the opportunity to facilitate community participation in building a critical guiding document for the Franklin School.

**All are invited to the Franklin Board of Education Meeting for the approval of the new Strategic Plan, and to celebrate this milestone for the Franklin School!
Monday, November 13, 7 pm, at the Franklin School.**

Thanks and Gratitude

To Superintendent John Giacchi, for his educational leadership in having the long-range vision to institute the first Strategic Plan for the Franklin School and to renew the Plan with community involvement;

To the Franklin Borough Board of Education, for opening the planning process to all school stakeholders who wished to contribute;

And to the parents, community members, Board members, and Franklin School educational professionals who joined us for one, two, or all three meetings to engage in candid conversations and hard work to support the students of our beloved Franklin School.

This document is the result of all of your dedication to the Franklin School and the children we serve, now and in the next five years.