

# READINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

## STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

2016-2020

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Readington Township School District, under the leadership of Superintendent Barbara Sargent, began a Strategic Planning initiative in early 2016 that resulted in a marvelous coordination of parents, students, teachers, administrators, board members, and community leaders coming together for deep analysis of district needs, thoughtful goal-setting discussions, and a committed focus on school improvement. This report details the Strategic Planning process, from Needs Assessment to Goal-Setting, and includes data gathered through a survey of staff, students, parents, and community members for our review and analysis.

### II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As the Readington Township School District began to lay the groundwork for the next Strategic Plan, we looked to a variety of measures that revealed information about the district's strengths and gaps. The district has several years of QSAC evaluation measurements which show the Readington Township Schools to be a high performing district in areas of Personnel, Fiscal Management, Operations, Governance, and Instruction and Program. The superintendent also conducts Roundtables every other month for the purpose of meeting with parents and community members for open dialogue about school-related issues. District and standardized assessments provide another picture of how well Readington students are achieving.

To further understand the current state of the district, we conducted an Intake Session on February 29, facilitated by Mark Reynolds, for the purpose of understanding issues critical to the school community that might be explored further in the Strategic Planning survey. This session was attended by community members, parents, students, and staff with the following strengths identified:

|                        |                            |                             |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Technology             | Teaching Staff             | Language Arts Program       |
| Green Initiatives      | Enrichment Programs        | Safe and Clean Facilities   |
| Community Support      | Full Day Kindergarten      | Positive Student Experience |
| Music and Art Programs | Differentiated Math Levels | Extra-Curricular Activities |

In May, a Strategic Planning survey was conducted which invited input from staff members, 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, parents, and community members. A summary of the survey results can be found in the Appendix of this report.

Survey results have been streamlined for this report and are provided in the Appendix as combined percentages for respondents answering Strongly Agree/Agree. Percentages of 75% and higher are labeled as Assets; percentages of 50 to 74% are labeled as Emerging Strengths; and percentages less than 50% are labeled as Possible Risks. Where there were questions that correlated to an early survey conducted in the spring of 2012, comparative results are offered.

Questions for students, parents, and community members focused on Curriculum, Student Experience, Community/Culture, Educators and Leaders, and Facilities/Infrastructure. Questions for district staff focused on these same areas and included an additional section on Climate. Respondents also had the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions, and those redacted comments were shared with the Strategic Planning CORE TEAM.

### III. IDENTIFIED NEEDS

A Strategic Planning CORE TEAM met on June 7-8 to review the results of the Strategic Planning Survey and analyze priority needs. Our team consisted of:

Facilitator:

Mark Reynolds

Community Leaders:

John Broten, Township Committee

Student Participants:

Melissa Albrecht

Ben van Zanten

Katherine Loew

Danny Corbin

James Kennedy

Board of Education Members:

Cheryl Filler

Chris Allen

Laura Simon

Anna Shinn

Parents:

Leigh-Ann Borella

Jennifer Ko

Eric Ko

Staff Members:

Anthony Tumolo, WHS

Alissa Buelow, TBS

Michele Krayem, HBS

Adam Connelly, RMS

Kevin Meyer, RMS

Administrative Team:

Ann DeRosa, WHS Principal

Sharon Moffat, RMS Principal

Sarah Pauch, Supervisor of Math, Science, Tech.

Karen Tucker, Supervisor of Pupil Services

Barbara Sargent, Superintendent of Schools

### IV. LONG TERM GOALS

A district strategy serves as a constant reference point to guide a school system and its leadership through the challenge of competing demands. Using the information from the Intake Session, the Strategic Planning surveys, and the QSAC evaluation, the CORE TEAM worked to establish the best plan to serve the nearly 1650 students who enter our classrooms each year. Toward that end, we have established these following FOUR long-term district Strategic Planning goals:

- ε *Expand academic and extra-curricular opportunities for students and provide staff with the professional training to support this work.*
- ε *Promote a healthy and caring school environment for students and staff members.*
- ε *Build a strong community in and among our schools and township.*
- ε *Enrich character education and service learning opportunities for our students.*

Specific objectives and timelines have been established for each goal and are outlined below.

***Expand academic and extra-curricular opportunities for students and provide staff with the professional training to support this work.***

| <b>Specific Objective</b>  | <b>Activities to Support Objective</b>   | <b>Responsible Persons</b>  | <b>Recommended Timeline</b>   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>1.1 Design and implement a future-oriented curriculum so each student will have the knowledge and skills to thrive in a multi-dimensional, global, and technological society.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teamwork opportunities for students through gaming and robotics;</li> <li>○ Improve STEM opportunities for students;</li> <li>○ Provide consistent foundation skills for students (Keyboarding, Google Apps, etc.)</li> <li>○ Provide further study in coding, programming, etc. for students;</li> <li>○ Increase opportunities for blended learning in classrooms;</li> <br/> <li>○ Continued professional development and modeling of instructional technology applications;</li> <li>○ Improve standards-based curriculum in all areas.</li> <li>○ Technology readiness for day to day student/teacher curriculum (Devices and Network) remains constant.</li> <li>○ Expand 1:1 Chromebook program for students in grades 4-8.</li> </ul> | <p>Principals, Teachers, Supervisors</p><br><p>RMS Staff</p><br><p>Principals<br/>Teachers<br/>Supervisors</p><br><p>Supervisors<br/>Staff Development<br/>Coordinator<br/>Technology Coordinator</p><br><p>Principals and Supervisors</p><br><p>Technology Coordinator</p><br><p>Technology Coordinator<br/>HBS/RMS Principals</p> | <p>Robotics Club or Team in place for September 2017</p><br><p>Coding Class in place for September 2016</p><br><p>20% of classrooms will employ blended learning in 2016-17;<br/>40% of classrooms will employ blended learning in 2017-18;<br/>60% of classrooms will employ blended learning in 2018-19;<br/>80% of classrooms will employ blended learning in 2019-20</p><br><p>Adhere to District Curriculum Renewal Plan</p><br><p>6th Grade 2016-17; 7th and 8th Grade 2017-18; 4-5th Grade 2018-19</p> |

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continued expansion of genres and reading levels available in book rooms</li> <li>○ Continue Virtual Learning opportunities through <i>VHS Consortium</i> with students.</li> </ul>  | Humanities Supervisor<br><br>Superintendent  | Ongoing<br><br>Ongoing.   |
| 1.2 Meet or exceed established student benchmarks.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PARCC performance will continue to strengthen in each testing cycle.</li> <li>○ We will continue to maintain 86% of students meeting reading benchmarks.</li> <li>○ Continued expansion of consistent benchmarking resources for K-8 teachers.</li> <li>○ Expand benchmark targets to include science, social studies, and other academic areas.</li> </ul>  | Principals and Supervisors<br><br>Principals, Supervisors, Teachers<br><br>Principals and Supervisors<br><br>Principals and Supervisors  | Growth goals will be established and shared in November 2016<br><br>Establish annual Mathematics benchmark goals – 2016-17<br><br>For 2017-18 |
| 1.3 Provide expanded academic opportunities for students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Home economics, law, current events, government, first aid, public speaking.</li> <li>○ Host leadership seminars for RMS students each semester.</li> <li>○ Review the RMS schedule to provide for restructuring of lunch/academic support period.</li> </ul>  | RMS Principal and Supervisors<br><br>Superintendent<br><br>RMS Principal and Team Leaders  | September 2017<br><br><br>September 2017  |
| 1.4 Expand opportunities in the arts.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Begin instrumental instruction for students in grade 4.</li> <li>○ Provide professional development opportunities for Social Studies, Language Arts Literacy, and Visual Arts teachers through the Newark Museum focused on teaching interdisciplinary units</li> <li>○ Expand Samba Kids beyond 5th grade</li> <li>○ Investigate scheduling options which will allow students to participate in more than one ensemble at RMS.</li> </ul> | Music teachers, Principals, Supervisor of Humanities<br><br>Supervisor of Humanities<br><br>Supervisor of Humanities, Principal, Music teachers<br><br>Supervisor of Humanities and RMS Music Department | 4 <sup>th</sup> grade instrument study to begin in January 2017.<br><br>Ongoing<br><br>2017-18<br><br>2017-18                                 |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Schedule a guest percussion specialist to the music department periodically throughout the school year</li> <li>o Organize a Readington Fine and Performing Arts Alliance</li> <li>o Develop a dance program or club experience at RMS.</li> </ul> | <p>Supervisor of Humanities and Music teachers</p> <p>Supervisor of Humanities and Music Teachers</p> <p>Superintendent and RMS Principal</p> | <p>2017-18</p> <p>2016-17</p> <p>2017-18</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

***Promote a healthy and caring school environment for students and staff members.***

| <b>Specific Objective</b>   | <b>Activities to Support Objective</b>   | <b>Responsible Persons</b>                  | <b>Recommended Timeline</b> |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 Support the changing needs of our diverse student population. | ○ Quarterly meetings of School Safety Committees   | Safety Committees, Principals, and Teachers | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ Common student-teacher meeting time, through Morning Meeting or Team Meetings, to promote positive relationships.  | Principals, Teachers                        | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ Establish a Study Skills and/or targeted Academic Support program for special education students in grades 4-8.  | Principals, Teachers                        | September 2017              |
| 2.2 Promote fair and consistent discipline in all classrooms.     | ○ RMS Team leaders will work with their teams to create consistent rules for each grade level (locker usage, use of backpacks, etc.)   | Principals, Teachers                        | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ Administrators will work with team leaders and teachers to establish appropriate consequences for various behaviors  | Principals, Teachers                        | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ Continue grade level monthly meetings to promote a positive team atmosphere. At meetings, there will be team-building activities and recognition of students for various accomplishments | RMS Principal, Teachers                     | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ New Teacher Orientation check-in meetings throughout the year (student management, student engagement, etc.)   | Principals, Staff Development Coordinator   | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ Promote PLC meetings with experienced staff on positive discipline procedures. Share out at faculty meetings.  | Principals, Teachers                        | 2017-18                     |
| 2.3 Improve student-teacher relationships.                        | ○ Morning meetings implemented in K-5 classrooms.  | Teachers, Principals                        | 2016-17                     |
|   | ○ Provide diversity trainings to support all staff and students.   | Leadership Team                             | Ongoing                     |

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promote an environment of self-regulation among staff.</li> <li>○ Encourage teacher-initiated positive phone calls to parents during the first two weeks of school.</li> </ul>   | <p>Principals, Collaborative Council</p> <p>Principals, Teachers</p>  | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2017</p>  |
| 2.4 Establish class size recommendations that promote a close-knit community.                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of Class Size guidelines with BOE Policy-Communications Committee.</li> </ul>   | <p>Superintendent</p>   | <p>Completed by January 2017</p>  |
| 2.5 Continue the focus on sustainability and environmentally friendly practices in all areas of school operation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recycle/compost across all four schools.</li> <li>○ Seek recertification through the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program.</li> <li>○ Pursue lower energy bills, environmentally responsible facilities, and relevant education programs.</li> <li>○ Establish Sustainability elective at RMS</li> <li>○ Apply for Green Ribbon status for Holland Brook and Readington Middle Schools.</li> </ul> | <p>Principals, Teachers, Students</p> <p>Facilities Manager, School Green Teams</p> <p>Green/Leadership/Facilities Teams</p> <p>Principal, Supervisor of Math, Science, and Tech.</p> <p>RMS and HBS Principals, Facilities Manager, School Green Teams</p> | <p>2017-18</p> <p>Review 2016-17<br/>Apply 2017-18</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2016</p> <p>2017-18 for one school;<br/>2018-19 for one school</p> |
| 2.6 Meet with student focus groups quarterly to assess school experiences.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Principal attendance at RMS Student Council meetings.</li> <li>○ Principals at all schools will schedule two student focus groups with one to focus on homework (volume, multiple deadlines, etc.) Participation should include a diverse student group.</li> <li>○ Report feedback via faculty meetings and parent newsletters.</li> </ul>  | <p>Principals and Teachers</p> <p>Principals</p> <p>Principals</p>  | <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p>  |
| 2.7 Work with the school cafeteria to promote healthy and tasteful food choices.                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conduct two food advisory meetings at each school with students, staff, and parents in attendance.</li> <li>○ Board members will visit at least two school cafeterias during walkthroughs and offer</li> </ul>   | <p>Business Administrator, Principals</p> <p>Superintendent</p>   | <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p>   |

|   |   |   |               |
|---|---|---|---------------|
|   | <p>feedback to the Superintendent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Include articles in school parent newsletters about new items on the menu, nutrition content, etc.</li> </ul> | Principals, Food Services                                     | 2016-17       |
| 2.8 Monitor the school facilities and restrooms and proactively plan for clean and safe areas for staff and students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify and implement key projects on the district's long range facility plan.</li> </ul>   | Facilities Manager, Business Administrator, Finance Committee | Ongoing       |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Renovation of student/faculty restrooms at RMS/TBS/WHS</li> </ul>  | Facilities Manager, Business Administrator                    | 2017-18       |
| 2.9 Update school Security plans  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conduct security drills as required by NJ Department of Education with a focus on re-unification.</li> </ul>   | District Leadership Team                                      | 2016-17       |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invite local law enforcement to observe and offer suggestions.</li> </ul>  | Principals  | 2016-17       |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At least two schools will practice an evacuation to a second location.</li> </ul>  | Leadership Team   | 2016-17       |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review security procedures with Board of Education.</li> </ul>   | Superintendent  | December 2016 |

***Build a strong community in and among our schools and township.***

| <b>Specific Objective</b>  | <b>Activities to Support Objective</b>  | <b>Responsible Persons</b>  | <b>Recommended Timeline</b>   |
|--|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Continue to partner with the H.S.A. to promote family-friendly activities throughout the year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ RMS will plan a Movie Night for families</li> </ul>  | RMS Principal   | 2016-17   |
| 3.2 Enhance club and after-school enrichment opportunities for students.                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Offer full roster of clubs at each school as per RTEA negotiated agreement.</li> </ul>   | Principals, Teachers  | 2016-17   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Plan for additional club opportunities (determined by student/teacher choice) at each school.</li> </ul>   | Principals, Teachers  | 2017-18   |
| 3.3 Organize staff and parent articulation and transition meetings.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parent Orientation (Kindergarten, Grade 4, Grade 6, and Grade 9)</li> </ul>  | Principals, Counselors, Teachers  | 2016-17   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schedule classroom walkthroughs across schools.</li> </ul>   | School Walkthrough Teams  | 1 cross-school visit per school by 2016-17; 2 cross-school visits per school by 2017-18   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schedule walkthroughs for inclusion and Resource Room classes across grades.</li> </ul>  | Principals, Supervisor of Pupil Services, CST, Teachers                       | 2016-17   |
| 3.4 Establish Parent Academies.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schedule morning and evening workshops, speakers, and book studies to engage parents in the school district.</li> </ul>  | Leadership Team   | 2 Parent Events for 2016-17<br>3 Parent Events for 2017-18<br>4 Parent Events for 2018-19 |
| 3.5 Promote opportunities for community involvement in the schools.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop a Master resource list of community experts for staff reference.</li> </ul>  | Superintendent, Technology Coordinator  | 2016-17   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expand National Education Week to include more guest instructors in the schools.</li> </ul>  | Superintendent  | 2016-17   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Plan a charity fundraiser for a local cause.</li> </ul>  | Superintendent  | 2016-17   |
| 3.6 Maintain a fiscally sustainable budget.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Present a budget that aligns with district goals and provides for sufficient funds for debt service on capital projects, the ability to generate operating surplus, and maintain cash reserves.</li> </ul> | Superintendent, Business Administrator, Finance Committee, Board of Education | Ongoing   |

***Enrich character education and service learning opportunities for our students.***

| <b>Specific Objective</b>   | <b>Activities to Support Objective</b>   | <b>Responsible Persons</b>   | <b>Recommended Timeline</b>                                 |
|---|--|--|---|
| 4.1 Develop a Mindfulness Program for students that weaves together components of peace, character education, yoga, self-management, and interpersonal communication. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased awareness of Wellness Plan and activities districtwide through emails for various events (e.g., Apple Crunch, Go for the Greens).</li> <li>○ Develop monthly “Morning Meeting” lessons for teachers to use with students that promote self-management and calming techniques.</li> <li>○ Work with P.E. teachers to implement yoga instruction and breathing techniques into classes, particularly at the end of lessons and at the end of recess.</li> <li>○ Provide articles to parents and staff to educate on mindfulness strategies to use with children.</li> </ul> | <p>Superintendent, Mindfulness Advisor, Principals</p> <p>Mindfulness Advisor</p> <p>Mindfulness Advisor, P.E. teachers, and Principals</p> <p>Superintendent, Mindfulness Advisor, Principals</p> | <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p> |
| 4.2 Provide consistent Character Education instruction to all students.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Host assemblies and team meetings that focus on character education.</li> <li>○ Promote digital etiquette with students. (More visible examples through charts, posters, conversations)</li> <li>○ Schedule monthly team meetings at RMS with students to promote positive social interactions.</li> </ul>  | <p>Principal, Teachers</p> <p>Technology Coordinator, Principals, Technology Teachers</p> <p>Principal, Teachers</p>   | <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p> <p>2016-17</p>                |
| 4.3 Develop age-appropriate community engagement opportunities for students at each school.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Schools will schedule on-site and (where appropriate) off-site activities.</li> </ul>   | <p>Principal, Teachers</p>   | <p>Ongoing</p>  |