

**LIVINGSTON
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**



**MID-YEAR
DISTRICT
GOALS UPDATE**



JANUARY 16, 2024

What is a District Goal?

- Areas we want to highlight and prioritize.
- Not the only focus of the Board or the Administration, we have many areas of focus.
- Developed jointly between administration and Board of Education.
- Consistency of goals provides for deeper impacts and clear direction.
- Aligned with 2022-2027 strategic plan.

DISTRICT GOAL - Safety and Wellness

Ensure the emotional well-being and mental health of all our students through a strong feeling of connectedness, a sense of belonging to their school community, and an awareness of the resources and support available to students and families. In an effort to thwart the negative impacts of stress and mental illness, and as the Strategic Plan 2022-2027 indicates “implementing the programming, resources, and opportunities to address the priority gaps to build the skills necessary to develop healthy habits for a well-balanced life.”

ACTION STEPS - Safety and Wellness

- Establish the home-school connection with *Community Conversations*, which will provide information on District curriculum, programs, and activities that support student mental health, and in addition, to hear community member concerns in surveys, forums, and meetings about them. Use information gathered from the conversations in order to better understand the main mental health concerns of the members of our school community.
- Use the new Mental Health Advisory Panel to address significant mental health concerns the District is observing, meeting with the panel a minimum of three times during the 2023-2024 school year. Implementing feedback and advice provided by the panel, feedback from counselors and other educators at each grade level, data from the equity audit, focus groups, and any other available sources, refine mental health programs and practices used by the District. Document at least two improvements to our mental health practices from the new information learned this year.
- As a result of ongoing feedback collected through teacher focus groups and observations, develop a Tier 1 compendium of resources and strategies to assist adults (i.e., staff and parents) in ensuring our students have the skills and support necessary for their social, emotional, and academic growth.. Through Professional Development, ensure that educators throughout the District access these resources and raise awareness about them in the greater community (i.e., parents).
- Conduct research and gather information on the mental health effects of technology use for children both in and out of school. Based on the information collected, audit current district practices across all grade bands in terms of screentime, access to appropriate information, and social challenges that may be connected to technology use. Using this data, reflect, assess, and adapt student technology usage practices based on existing research.

Safety and Wellness Update

- In addition to the many previous ways of engaging parents in school conversations, this year the following have been added:
 1. Exit tickets after family events through the school counseling department asking *Was this event helpful? What are other topics related to balance and wellness that you would like to learn more about? Do you know the resources available you and your child within LPS to support their wellness?*
 2. Transition website [NEW LPS Transition Continuum website](#) shared through the Department Equity newsletter and the Spotlight
 3. Mental Health First Aid training for staff and students- information events held for parents
 4. Expanded SAC and district-wide events in response to input from the Mental Health Advisory Team- included topics surrounding parent needs:
 - * *Parenting During a Time of Violence and Grief*
 - * *Talking About the Misinformation Surrounding Medicinal Use and Abuse of Drugs for All Parents*
 - * *Grounding Parents: The Benefits of Mindfulness and Self-Care for All Parents*
 - * *Parenting Gen Z & Alpha: Critical Thinkers with Healthy Minds for All Parents*
- Meeting with Mental Health Panel indicated that we should try to focus on our work on parent wellness, self-regulation, and self-management. See above for how this group informed the topics for parent academies this year.
- In addition to our Livingston U courses and those that staff pursue individually, the district and buildings have been providing PD for staff for Mental Health First Aid Training,
- Intervention and Referral Services focused on tools and strategies related to Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral interventions, relationship with NJ4S (a department within DCPD designed to support schools and students during the national mental health crisis for children and teens), and planning more for the second half of the year.
- The district has added question within the monthly mental health wellness check-ins through school counseling regarding the stress associated with technology usage. This information is analyzed regularly by school counselors, principals, and the director of school counseling. It is utilized to provide direct support to students and to inform school based programming. In February, we will be sharing these results with all administrators to consider as they begin their planning for next school year..
- Conducted Community Lesson on the effects of Technology and targeting of messages through the internet to begin a conversation on social media use and the veracity of information that comes at us through social media.

DISTRICT GOAL - Teaching and Learning

Investigate and identify highly valued instructional elements for the development of an instructional framework around which to build common language of instruction, authentic learning experiences and assessment, and a real-world context to foster curriculum development and student and educator growth.

ACTION STEPS - Teaching and Learning

- Engage in district-wide instructional rounds to identify recurring highly-valued instructional elements from K-12. The initial rounds will occur between September 2023 and December 2023 with some rounds in the Spring. A report will be made to the Board no later than the summer of 2024.
- Analyze data of recent observation and evaluation documents, other districts' instructional frameworks, rigor of individual courses, student outcomes, and satisfaction with post-secondary opportunities in order to recognize pluses and deltas currently evident in the district.
- Establish a documented framework for defining district-wide focuses in curriculum and instruction that align with our Portrait of a Graduate and feedback cycle and ensure opportunities for real-world learning.
- Establish a process for continuous reflection and growth including resources and professional development opportunities. The instructional framework will be based on continuous evolution rather than stagnate requirements. Ultimately to embed a process of continual reflection and development for instructional excellence over time.
- By August 2024 articulate instructional focuses of the district for the 2024-2025 school year, and work with administrators, supervisors, teachers, and SCIP Committees to design professional development, which addresses and enables assessment of identified focus areas in all aspects of schooling (Pre-K-12, academic, specials, school culture, advisory, and community).
- Present to the Board determined values and priorities as a District.

Teaching and Learning - Update

- **September 2023:** Strategic Plan Implementation Team worked to develop a process for continual reflection and growth and formulated broad concept for instructional rounds.
- **September 2023:** Instructional Rounds committee was formed, spanning all nine schools in the District. The committee designed protocols for the implementation of instructional rounds.
- **September - December 2023:** Engaged in three rotations of instructional rounds. Data was collected (connected to Danielson Framework and Portrait of a Graduate) and correlated.
- **October - November 2023:** Analyzed observation data to determine additional trends in classroom instruction.
- **November 2023:** Established a district-wide Professional Development Committee
- **January 2024:** Committee met together as a whole to analyze instructional rounds data, identifying key areas in which to build our instructional focus.
- **Next Steps:**
 - **January - February 2024:** Document the instructional focuses around which to emphasize structures and strategies to meet our mission.
 - **Spring 2024:** Expand instructional rounds to include more teachers and revise the document.

DISTRICT GOAL - Leadership and Governance

Enlist staff leaders to contribute to the process of comprehensive self-evaluation and reflection, and work with administrators and content area supervisors to ensure the continuation of the alignment of district efforts to incorporate values-based practice.

ACTION STEPS - Leadership and Governance

- Establish, resource, and train newly created Threat Assessment Teams and develop a process through which students who are identified to be at risk for violent behaviors can be paired with a mentor who would then serve as a trusted adult. Use the Threat Assessment Teams to connect struggling students with proper resources in the schools and community to help address issues. Collect data from Threat Assessment Teams across the district to determine how many students have been served through these teams and document what types of interventions have been utilized to support students. Evaluate the operation of Threat Assessment Teams year one in order to inform future practice.
- Complete all preparation for the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) evaluation scheduled for the Livingston Public Schools during the 2023-2024 school year. Pass all aspects of QSAC as required by the New Jersey Department of Education, with a minimum score of 90% in all indicators, including Instruction and Program; Fiscal Management; Governance; Operations; and Personnel.
 - a. Create a committee to oversee the process of preparing for the QSAC evaluation, ensuring that each requirement is understood, and help facilitate the visit from the Department of Education.
 - b. Work collaboratively with administrators and supervisors to ensure all indicators are met throughout the District. Focus on any indicators that do not appear to be addressed completely and remediate the indicators.
 - c. Ensure that all District Review Components are completed, ensure the Board is informed throughout the process, and present the results of the process to the Board and all stakeholders once complete.
- Conduct a formal assessment of our current post-secondary transition guidance practices. To evaluate progress, conduct student focus groups about their experiences with their post-secondary advice from our Counseling Department. Consult with deans in higher education admissions to provide input on LPS post-secondary counseling practices, including LHS School Profile and LHS student applications.
- Through teacher focus groups, informal discussions with teachers, and A review of teacher lesson plans, ensure the Portrait of a Graduate is being accessed as a resource in curricular and extracurricular settings throughout the district. Continue to thoughtfully connect classroom instruction and parent programming the six elements of the Portrait of a Graduate and reinforce the skills associated with the qualities found in the Portrait of a Graduate. Through observation, teacher focus groups, and discussions with lesson planning groups, evaluate whether skills are being emphasized through classroom learning experiences. Communicate with parents, so they understand those skills they can work on at home. Share feedback from teacher focus groups with the Board.

Leadership and Governance Update

- **Threat Assessment Teams formed and functioning at all schools. PD provided and State trainings attended.**
- **State training attended for QSAC, initial forms completed, committee established, initial self-evaluation completed and on the agenda for Board Approval. Visit from County DOE anticipated January 31, 2024.**
- **Meetings held with College Counselor and Director of School Counseling to begin reflecting and planning for post-secondary efforts for 2023-2024 school year. Subsequent meeting held for presentation on post-secondary report to Board of Education. Much information shared on this topic tonight.**
- **Working with supervisors and principals to ensure that the tenets of the Portrait of a Graduate are being focused upon in classrooms and other programming. Scheduling meetings in the winter in spring with teachers directly to get direct feedback on Portrait of a Graduate. Attending professional development sessions focused on the ideas identified in the portrait. Plan to engage in a survey of staff in the spring as well.**

DISTRICT GOAL - Community and Culture

Engaging all stakeholders, especially students and their families and guardians, in educational programs is essential to creating a community of equity in our school district. Ensure just outcomes for each student, raise marginalized voices, and challenge imbalances of power and privilege.

ACTION STEPS - Community and Culture

- **Complete and consider the third-party equity audit that began in May 2023.**
 1. Review report with administrators, equity coaches, and the Board's Equity Committee, and full Board.
 2. Examine any disparities between current and recommended practices.
 3. Make the audit report available publicly and conduct a public presentation.
- **Continue to provide effective educational opportunities to increase positive student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions around culture and equity.**
 1. Ensure community/advisory time in order to foster relationships between adults and students and strengthen relationships and build connections based on mutual respect, with teachers valuing the individuality of each student and students expressing the feeling of belonging and safety in their classrooms. This will be measured through the observed interactions and relationships developed between teachers and students, collected survey data, and feedback groups. Present feedback to the Board on identified themes.
 2. Maintain forward movement with the district work related to implementation of professional development, 100%'s, and student voice in our school buildings.
 3. Gather input and define responses to the 100%'s from staff, students, and equity team members.
 4. Develop a continuum of skills, resources, and lessons from Pre-k to 12, which enable students/teachers to build upon the skills learned in prior years. These will include social emotional skills, which can be found in the District's SEL materials.
- **Begin curriculum, assessment, and instructional audit in a minimum of one additional content area (other than Social Studies) to determine where there are missing perspectives and ensure that content reflects diverse voices and provides opportunities to hear multiple perspectives.**
- **Continue to use talents of faculty and staff members to help facilitate, reflect upon and expand, and improve equity initiatives in every school in the District.**
 1. Based on the results of the Equity Audit, ensure that a diverse range of students (i.e. cultural, ethnic, and neurodiverse students) and their needs are considered when planning and evaluating inclusion work in LPS—curriculum programs, instructional practices, and student activities—so that each student feels heard, valued, and included.
 2. Formally and systematically reflect on the effectiveness of Positions that incorporate equity work and make recommendations for adjustment of job descriptions.
 3. Gather feedback from students, equity team members, and other stakeholders on the impact of the equity-related advisors and coaching positions. Share feedback with the Board, mid-year and end-of-year.
- **Share feedback with the Board, mid-year and end-of-year.**

Community and Culture Update

- **Third Party Equity Audit presented to the BOE and public in December 2023.**
 - Administration, Equity Coaches and Building Level Equity Teams evaluating gaps in current practice versus recommendations provided in the audit.
 - Interviews with coaching companies were conducted in September of 2023. Recommendations were provided to the BOE Equity Committee for consideration. Next steps are forthcoming.
 - Students across grades continue to participate in regular morning meetings and/or advisory lessons.
 - Examples of topics of the advisory lessons include:
 - MPM: Identity Web Activity (including 100%s), Butterfly Project, Story of Our Names, Respectful Communication, Intent vs. Impact
 - HMS: Equity v. Equality, Getting to Know the 100%s, Creating Safe Spaces through Community Agreements, Moving Safe Spaces into Courageous Conversations (through the context of Antisemitism and Islamophobia)
 - LHS: Building Community through Individuals, Understanding our Non-Negotiables (Community Agreements including 100%s), Using Media Literacy in Today's World, Acts of Kindness and Cultural Celebrations
 - Students are included in forward thinking conversations (ie: use of 100%s, future of our schools with A.I., etc.) during these meetings and in focus groups.
- **Begin curriculum, assessment, and instructional audit in a minimum of one additional content area (other than Social Studies) to determine where there are missing perspectives and ensure that content reflects diverse voices and provides opportunities to hear multiple perspectives.**
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 2. Formally and systematically reflect on the effectiveness of Positions that incorporate equity work and make recommendations for adjustment of job descriptions. Will be discussed via the budgeting process

DISTRICT GOAL - Finance and Facilities

Take inventory of the District's facilities to determine current strengths, deficiencies, uses, and needs. Coordinate with town officials and management to gain an understanding of future

District needs through regular Liaison Committee meetings, ensuring that our facilities meet the diverse needs of our student population. This should include school facilities and athletic fields and courts. From that investigation, devise a long-range facilities plan. Evaluate current investment in flexible classroom spaces throughout the District.

ACTION STEPS - Finance and Facilities

- Meet with the Long Range Facility Planning Committee a minimum of five times during the 2023-24 school year. The committee shall be comprised of stakeholders from the District and the community. The goal of the committee will be to identify facilities strengths, deficiencies, uses, and needs and provide recommendations about the long-term needs. Discuss and consider possible solutions for any facility deficiencies and compare benefits and drawbacks of each solution, considering budget, timeline, and alignment with the District vision, mission, and goals.
- Continue meeting regularly with representatives from the Township, including bi-monthly meetings at minimum between the Superintendent and the Town Manager. The Superintendent shall also attend regular meetings with the Liaison Committee composed of two Board Members and two Town Council members.
- Identify, produce, and promote a consensus plan for moving forward with a long-range facility plan.

Finance and Facilities - Update

- **Establishment of the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee, two meetings held so far, third meeting tomorrow night.**
- **Several meetings with architect regarding possibilities to address space issues in the district.**
- **Participation in 2:2 meetings with the Board of Education and Town Council to partner with the town to anticipate enrollment issues and opportunities for facility expansion. Meetings occurring regularly.**
- **On track for producing a consensus long range facility plan by the end of the school year.**
- **Modular units passed inspection for use at Burnet Hill and Hillside elementary schools.**
- **Impending transfer of Monmouth Court building from Township to School District to create more options for space.**

Questions?

