

STERLING HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Mr. Matthew Sheehan, Superintendent

Minutes from the March 22, 2022 Forum
“The Path that U-KNIGHTS Us”

On the evening of March 22, 2022, the U-KNIGHTED Vision ‘22 Strategic Planning Process continued with the third and final community forum focusing on the future of the Sterling Regional High School. The meeting, attended by about 50 members of the school community, started with Superintendent, Mr. Matt Sheehan, sharing some district milestones. This included introducing the longest serving member of the SRHS staff and a district grandparent and student who represent one of the “third generation” Sterling families, all included in this strategic planning process. Following this presentation, participants were reminded of the goals and processes surrounding this strategic planning process and then reviewed the “Points of Pride” consensus items that were developed during the January meeting and the “Vision” consensus items developed during the February meeting. All of these items are important parts of the strategic planning process and will serve as resources as the plan develops. After review of the process thus far, participants got to work in groups of 8-10 members.

The focus of the evening’s discussion was “The Path to U-KNIGHT Us” - the development of goal statements and strategic priorities for each of the six areas of focus identified during the February Vision-Setting meeting - School as the Center of Community (Consolidation/Regionalization); Trade Programs; Academic Preparation; Scheduling; School Culture; and Mental and Physical Health/SEL.

During this session, participants were initially asked to consider contributing to one of the six areas identified above by developing a goal statement for that area and then adding strategic priorities to help reach that goal. After this phase, all participants had an opportunity to leave feedback on the ideas of each of the other groups. Finally, each participant was given three dots to place on the chart paper of the ideas they felt most important for moving Sterling forward.

The information below is a summary of the work of the groups, including the original ideas and feedback presented to each group. Moving forward, the superintendent, administrative team, and staff will determine how to best frame these goals within the context of the school system and develop action plans to realize the vision and goals developed during the last three months.

These action plans will include: The specific actions necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives, measures of accountability, resources required, timelines for implementation, and indicators of success.

The SRHSD would like to thank ALL participants who took part in the process!

<p>Area of Focus: School as the Center of the Community</p>	<p><u>Proposed Goal Statement (27 dots)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop one single PK-12 school district that includes all types of involvement from the communities. <p><u>Strategic Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a poll to provide feedback from individual towns (is there support in the community for this?) • If feedback is positive, the school boards and other governing bodies meet to discuss further • Fact-find recent district consolidation efforts for information and guidance <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great goal and strategies • Most people in Stratford do not want to give up their PK-8 district • This is two topics - one is focus on alignment and consolidation and the other is community support by individuals • Pray for state mandate • Financial issues of consolidation - buildings, taxes, educator contracts, loss of jobs • Return to more interdistrict collaboration (Yes ++) • Community service as requirement for HS kids • Many towns in one HS, teach students about where they live • Consolidate middle schools first • For this to be realized, all districts need to commit to taking baby steps • Shared services, languages, math, etc. • Joint activities w/clubs and other community groups so that students feel welcomed and empowered
<p>Area of Focus: Trade Programs</p>	<p><u>Proposed Goal Statement (15 dots)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase exposure to career opportunities in a variety of occupations in both college- and non-college-bound students <p><u>Strategic Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer curriculum to support exploration at the appropriate age • Build relationships with alumni and professional in various careers <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus this more toward non-college-bound students • Include special needs students in this program (Yes ++) • Include military recruiting • Add apprenticeship programs and internships • Expose students to opportunities to the career programs at our county and other county voc/tech high schools • Consider guest speakers from a wide range of careers • Let seniors attend career fair • Co-op opportunities / senior experience • Can we create "in-school" experiences to meet some of these goals? • Add relevant volunteer opportunities • Career nights, career and trade day open to all grades (Yes ++) • Use time at end of year for career day • Mandatory home ec and shop in middle school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember that broader knowledge can improve career success (i.e., understanding math as a builder) View this as a spectrum, not just college vs trade Determine whether a student would do best with or without come college (i.e., county) to advance their career goals
<p>Area of Focus: Academic Preparation</p>	<p><u>Proposed Goal Statement (14 dots)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfigure schedule and increase focus on continuity of learning, increased academic rigor, utilization of academic resources, and streamline vision to improve academic preparation and increase test scores. (Yes ++++) <p><u>Strategic Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize students with standardized tests; pre- and post-school remedial classes; curriculum aligns to testing Dual credit college courses Specialized focus English classes (options) Summer program for incoming frosh Offer trendy tech classes (gaming, digital photography) Challenge students IEP and ELL with higher expectations Computer-based remedial or acceleration options Work closer with sending districts Schedule math full year; allow schedule flexibility to allow struggling students to improve More AP classes Allow college course students the opportunity to increase their scores through their curriculum Support students who are not achieving to potential; offer remedial programs to help close gaps Increase expectations beyond “good enough” Encourage non-traditional teaching strategies More academic clubs Visit and model what other schools are doing More interaction with school counselors Envision academics as a spectrum where students can advance to their max abilities Utilize all available time Ensure students and parents are aware of all options “Big picture” scheduling with more focus on student input and interest Tutoring and mentoring by students Adjust qty of course work, shift to independent homework Allow athletics to count at PE to allow for add’l academics Increase the need for unique research versus Google copy Summer work to keep brains active Increase rigor in lessons Ensure curriculum includes space to include current issues; more out of classroom experiences More rigor / challenging work <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared definition of rigor How are we assessing students? By what they know or do they “play student” well?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love it! Do it! 2022-2023 • How do we motivate students and hold them accountable? • Perfect, love it! • A lot of this will come with a scheduling change to full-year classes and moving to a single district • Increase rigor in CPA and CPB classes • check +++ • Discuss with all interested parties (i.e., unions) re: reconfiguring schedule. • Bring district goal of accountability back into focus
<p>Area of Focus: Scheduling</p>	<p><u>Proposed Goal Statement (34 dots)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a daily schedule that will improve academic performance <p><u>Strategic Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter class times (~55 min) • Core academic areas are year-long • Alternatives to study hall • Shorter lunches • Rotating schedule? <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping “academic improvement” as the focus is important • Loving it all! • 30 minute lunch? • Is there a way to combine block scheduling with traditional? The best of both worlds? • Revamp study halls to remove down time in the day • Lunch and Learns - time when all students eat lunch and then can go work with teachers, pursue independent study, etc. • Love shorter classes and shorter lunch • Can we incorporate more common planning time for teachers? • Increase rigor and expectations • We like shorter class times; full year classes are important! (Yes +++) • If we keep semesters, how can we balance them? Some students have no cores one semester and all the other • Multi-sport athletes opt out of PE • LOVE this • Block scheduling does not enable a teacher to teach as much as he/she could in a regular 40-50 min class all year long • Ensure that students get into important classes - not told they are full • Honors and Ap stay block; CPA and CPB traditional classes • AP block can be a problem if the class is the spring semester since the test is in May • Modified block • 6-day schedule • How will each idea help w homework?
<p>Area of Focus: School Climate</p>	<p><u>Proposed Goal Statement (11 dots)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagement of ALL members of the community (students, staff, parents, public)

	<p><u>Strategic Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create committees to incorporate student, teacher, parent voice in decision-making and programming • Promote Sterling programs more across community-at-large • Re-evaluate our “traditions”, policies, and procedures to determine: Are they still relevant? Can they be tweaked? <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we engage the current students and staff? • PTA • Create a buddy program • What do you mean by “traditions?” • Need more thought about ALL cultures • Add community members and non-parents to “voice” • Repetitive • Use school facilities for community events: fire pottery in kiln @ cost; Resume writing workshops; skill share; classes for adults; yoga • Advertise but realize not everyone is on Facebook and Twitter • Advertise stuff! • Use “40 developmental assets” from Chicago Search Institute • Re-evaluate our curriculum so we can reach all students; offer a broader range of courses to appeal to a wider range of students, more focused topics based on cultures (womens, African-American) • Add community service; integrate students into the community • Don’t forget the community of taxpayers who don’t have students in school; including in decision-making. Most would be supportive. • Community service requirements • Most definitely re-examine traditions; the world is changing • Cultural artwork throughout school • Host more events at HS
<p>Area of Focus: Mental and Physical Health / SEL</p>	<p><u>Proposed Goal Statement (14 dots)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Mental and Physical Health programs into the school day <p><u>Strategic Priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible scheduling so everyone has access • Eliminate study halls and bring more mental/physical health programs into the day • Comfortability - ensuring students are comfortable sharing their struggles by including safe spaces, confidentiality, group and individual counseling, outside confidential therapists, meditation/ de-escalation room • Normalize talking about mental and physical health • Have various ways to decompress and get away from tech <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health committee of faculty and students • Allow students to access area outside in the back during school day (study hall and lunch) • Include parent input • Funding? • Bye bye study hall, love to get rid of study hall, get rid of study halls, replace study halls with classes, good job - study halls s*ck (Yes++++)

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not eliminate study halls, but give more options, busy students need them, study hall can be a calming space for some students• Have areas in school for mindfulness / timeout• I like the idea of a calming / de-escalation space• Sustainable costs?• Awareness of diversity issues, LGBTQ+, racial issues, family structure• Have clubs that give students real world experiences (SADD, Moms Demand Action)• Have classes/electives in psychology, abnormal psychology, developmental psychology which assist students w understanding human psychology• Diverting from current schedule might help• Good start, needs more detail to accomplish |
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