
**Frelinghuysen Township School District
Strategic Planning 2025
Meeting #1 Recap**

This Spring, the Frelinghuysen Township Board of Education intends to approve a Strategic Plan which will guide the Board's and Administration's decisions over the next three to five years. The Board of Education and Superintendent Jarlyn Veras would like to form the District's new Strategic Plan with community participation from a wide variety of school stakeholders. Thus, the District announced and advertised that all those interested are welcome to join in the process, which will be accomplished over three 90-minute evening meetings at the Frelinghuysen Township Elementary School on March 17, April 17, and May 7, with consultant Kathleen Helewa facilitating the sessions. Approximately fifteen people attended the first meeting to work together on the new Strategic Plan, including Frelinghuysen residents, parents, teachers, administrators, and the Board of Education.

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 optimally to support the community's aspirations for the students of Frelinghuysen Township.

In order to create a Plan that is forward-thinking and can be aligned with the realities of the District, Frelinghuysen'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 Veras presented a comprehensive State of the District report. The report provided an overview of the District, including trends in demographics and enrollment numbers, staffing levels, academic programming, standardized test scores, the District's continuum of interventions and support, co-curricular activities, curricular resources, parent and community supports, the state of school facilities, and the District Goals for the current school year. Superintendent Veras also spoke to school successes as well as current and forecasted challenges for the District.

At the conclusion of Ms. Veras's report, all participants then split into three small groups, and individually completed their own SWOT analyses of the school district. Participants completed the four sections of a **SWOT** in one-minute intervals for each category: **S**trengths, internal factors that have a positive outcome for the student experience and are completely under the District's control; **W**eaknesses, factors that could be improved to have a better outcome for the student experience and are wholly under the District's control; **O**pportunities, conditions which are coming from outside of the District but have or may have a positive impact on our students; and **T**hreats, external factors and conditions over which the District has no control but which may harm our school or the students' experience in the District.

The small groups then worked together to share the individuals' analyses and to come up with a collective SWOT analysis for their group, coming to consensus on about five bullet points for each category. The following are the small groups' SWOT reports, verbatim:



Green Group

Strengths:

- MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports) in the classroom
- Teacher collaboration
- Student-teacher ratio
- Pairing students
- Increased security
- Therapy dog

Weaknesses:

- Upgrading facility
- Cleanliness
- Small class sizes

Opportunities:

- Strong BOE
- Business growth with potential financial gains
- Communication within the classroom to families

Threats:

- Low student enrollment
- Social media
- Tardiness
- Future of State and Federal funding
- Charter school / alternate school
- AI

Blue Group

Strengths:

- Collaboration between grade levels
- Small school community
- Stability of staff and BOE
- Before / aftercare
- Bindi the therapy dog
- Drama
- Clubs



Blue Group, continued

Weaknesses:

- Building maintenance
- Opportunities for vertical collaboration
- Use of data (i.e., there is a copious amount of student performance data; it can be difficult to identify which data should be used to drive decision-making)
- Conflict resolution

Opportunities:

- Grant (PK funding)
- Working with the community

Threats:

- Charter school
- Affordable housing
- Turnover of part-time staff
- Children's screentime outside of school

Orange Group

Strengths:

- Small classrooms
- Safety and security
- Talented / long-term staff (dedicated)
- Good interventions
- Family support
- Before / aftercare
- Smartboards

Weaknesses:

- Food service
- Technology (\$\$)
- Heating / cooling
- Articulation to the middle school
- Part-time counselor

Opportunities:

- Parents that are teachers
- Further parent involvement
- State partnership



Orange Group, continued

Threats:

- Small budget
- Small student population
- Stepping stone for admins
- Charter school
- Trenton
- Bus costs

Our work for the evening concluded with thanks to all those who joined us to support our beloved school district, and to Superintendent Veras and the Frelinghuysen BOE for this opportunity to engage in purposeful and robust conversation about our schools and students. We will continue the work at our next session on **Thursday, April 17**, during which we will delineate our long-term aspirations for Frelinghuysen students. **Interested participants from every facet of the school community who were not able to attend our first meeting are eagerly encouraged to join us at our second and third Strategic Planning sessions.** Meetings begin in the Frelinghuysen Township Elementary School Media Center at 6pm and finish at 7:30pm.



Come join us on Wednesday, May 7, at 6pm in the Frelinghuysen Township Elementary School Media Center! Everyone welcomed—attend with a friend!

- Mark your calendar for our third and final meeting on May 7-