



Merrimack School District Goal Setting Summary





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Participants

- Laurie Rothhaus, Chair
- Lori Peters, Vice Chair
- Naomi Halter, Board Member
- Jenna Hardy, Board Member
- Ken Martin, Board Member
- Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
- Melissa Fazlic, Director of Human Resources
- Everett "Bill" Olsen, Interim Chief Educational Officer
- Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business

The session was facilitated by:

- Carl Weber, Director, Member Services, Primex³
- Toni Flewelling, Member Services Consultant, Primex³

Purpose and Intended Results

The purpose of this goal setting session was to assist Merrimack School District establishing short and long-term goals that will move the organization's vision forward. The process included a review of the transition vision as well as setting goals and strategic objectives. The goals identified will become part of the organization's ongoing action plan moving forward.

Ground Rules

At the outset of the session, participants identified a list of ground rules that set the stage for how to proceed. Participants chose the following ground rules for themselves:

- Be open-minded when listening
- Listen
- Respect everyone's opinion
- Everyone has a chance to have a voice
- Be a good listener (whole body listening)
- Use active listening
- Equal airtime – all voices heard
- Be candid – even when hard
- Don't talk over others – allow them to get their thoughts out
- Listen to understand, not to respond
- There are no bad ideas



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Brief Review of District's Transition Vision

As the district is in transition, the following phrases, thoughts, and ideas were added by the group to reflect and provide clarity on the "transition vision" for the district over the next 12-24 months:

- Be the Change – the Merrimack School Board and the Merrimack School District are committed to delivering high quality education that is student-centered and evidence-based.
- Do not venture into any "new and unproven" shiny objects that will drastically change the course of this district – slow, methodical, measured.
- Open communication – keep goals in mind – what is best for the students, staff...
- The vision of Merrimack School District Board is to ensure all policies, people, and collaborative procedures are aligned with our new strategic plan and prepared for a new superintendent.
- Identify and address areas of improvement for MSD and create an actionable plan to move us forward (Let's be a 2025 district, not 1975!)
- Re-evaluate and reassess current practices, policies, and procedures. Keep what works, eliminate what doesn't.
- Opportunity to leave behind that which does not serve us while embracing our values and things we do well.
- Trusting, respectful, collaborative culture that values everyone's thoughts and ideas. A culture that inspires and motivates everyone to take risks.
- Identifying core values of community.
- Connection within and between all community members

Identification and Categorization of Goals

Goals were defined as qualitative statements of what Merrimack School District intends to accomplish over a period of 12 to 24 months. These are "big picture" items vital to organizational success.

Participants were asked to present goals to move the organization forward. As each goal was presented, the individual decided whether goal was similar to, or different from, a previously stated goal. The individual goals (*bulleted list after the collective goal name*) created a larger collective goal and narrative that took shape during the session. The goals were then named, and a narrative was created by the breakout groups and presented back in the full session for feedback and additions. Goals are presented in the order they were addressed and are not ranked for importance.



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Development of Strategic Objectives for Goals

Strategic Objectives were defined as short- and long-term quantitative results that directly support the goals. Objectives should be measurable, achievable, and consistent with the goals, and should also align with Merrimack School District's overall vision, mission, and core values. These objectives create the basis for an ongoing action plan going forward.

Participants were broken into groups, and each group was tasked naming and summarizing the larger goal to develop at least two strategic objectives to help Merrimack School District achieve this goal. Each group was assigned to address one of the broad goals listed below. Participants then returned to report their identified strategic objectives to the full group, and the full group had the opportunity to provide additional feedback and direction on the objectives.

Strategic Objectives – Participants were asked to describe **WHAT** they wanted to happen, as well as **WHEN** the action/result should happen, and **WHO** is responsible. In summary:

► **Goal Category #1: Create an engaged, inclusive, and collaborative district culture built on mutual trust and respect.**

Goal Summary: As part of our goal to create a positive culture, we will intentionally recruit, hire, train, and retain quality staff. The school board and district administration will see each individual staff member as a whole person to ensure they feel valued for their uniqueness and contributions. By cultivating connection, we aim to create a school community where all stakeholders are invested in the well-being of staff, student, and the community.

The individual goals that made up the category:

- By creating a safe, supportive inclusive culture where all administrators, teachers, and staff feel valued and empowered so we attract and retain exceptional educators
- Recruit, hire, and retain high quality staff
- Retain good teachers
- Ensure we have the right people in the right number of seats on the bus
- School/district culture – implement norms and a culture of inclusion and open communication
- Reshape our culture from top down to collaborate and connect
- Invest in the social and emotional development and well-being of our students, their families, staff, and community members
- Implement a robust “360” evaluation system and oversee that every employee has one that is submitted to the school board by **June 30, 2023** and annually.
- Keep up to date job descriptions to ensure we are “with the times” and staff know what is expected



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- Continue the strategic planning process with all stakeholders ensuring collaboration times are accessible to all
- Develop and grow a strong mental health/social and emotional learning support system supported by new staff, curriculum, and culture
- Look for patterns in staff turnover through exit interviews, exit surveys, and “stay interviews” to improve turnover and increase recruitment efforts within the district

Strategic Objective #1

WHAT: Develop district strategic plan intentionally involving all stakeholders

WHEN: June 30, 2023

WHO: School Board and Administration

Strategic Objective #2

WHAT: Create clear, consistent expectations and evaluations through up-to-date accurate job descriptions and evaluation model

WHEN: 1. Board access to evaluations by **June 30, 2023**
2. ADA compliant job descriptions by **September 1, 2023**

WHO: Administration and HR, supported by the Board

Strategic Objective #3

WHAT: Invest in the social and emotional development and well-being of our staff, students, and their families

WHEN: • Initial plan by **2nd October meeting 2022**
• Update at **July 2023 meeting**
• Annual plan by **September** and update in **July annually**

WHO: Administration in partnership with the Director of Student Wellness

Strategic Objective #4

WHAT: Look for patterns to reduce staff turnover and increase recruitment efforts with the district

WHEN: Report to board in **June of each year** (public or non-public depending on the nature of turnover)

WHO: Human Resources



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► Goal Category #2: The Pathways to Graduation

Goal Summary: Create multiple pathways to graduation that include robust course offerings, responsive programming and intervention, and engaging learning experiences for all students. This goal seeks to address the learning and curriculum gaps that exist in the course offerings and programs that lead to the successful completion of high school requirement.

The individual goals that made up the category:

- Focus on the creation of an alternative education program at MHS to help those kids in peril and those who feel disengaged from the school population
- Address course offerings at the high school to increase and improve options for students at all levels and on any path to graduation
- Expand course offerings to include partnerships with community to develop and ELO program
- Develop and implement an alternative pathways program (MHS)
- Better understand the needs of our special education population and integrate them into the general education population – also vocational education program!
- Lower dropout rate by establishing multiple paths to graduation

Strategic Objective #1

WHAT: Review of MHS program of studies
Review of class size and caps for running courses
Review of class failure rates and repeats

WHEN: Building - **November 2022**; District Leadership Team - **December 2022**;
School Board - **January 2023**

WHO: Building – Department Heads, Guidance, Administration, District Leadership Team, School Board

Strategic Objective #2

WHAT: Develop/create innovative ways for students to earn high school credit. This can be done through ELOs, work studies, Voc-Tech, etc.

WHEN: Proposal for **2023-2024**; Budget – **November 2022**

WHO: Guidance, Building Leadership Team at High School, District Leadership Team



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Strategic Objective #3

WHAT: Develop/create a system of identifying and supporting at-risk and struggling students that needs an alternative path to graduation.

Number of students at risk, what is being done to support them, action plans

WHEN: December 2022

WHO: Guidance, Special Education, Director of Wellness, Building Leadership Team, District Leadership Team

Strategic Objective #4

WHAT: Develop and implement a true competency-based grading system that provides multiple opportunities and timelines for students to demonstrate their learning

Include review of current practices – identify areas of improvement

WHEN: Review of practices – February 2023

Areas of improvement – May 2023

WHO: Guidance, Building Leadership Team, District Leadership Team

► Goal Category #3: Improve our learning outcomes by ensuring our instruction is responsive to the varied needs of our student population

Goal Summary: Facilitate an educational model that empowers and equips students to meet their full potential. Create opportunities for collaboration on evidence-based district priorities.

The individual goals that made up the category:

- Address learning loss by implementing a screening tool with built-in educational tools to target improvement at the individual level (i.e., i-Ready) Elem
- Ensure that our instruction is responsive to the varied needs of our student population.
 - ✓ Includes visible, robust curriculum
 - ✓ Measures of progress monitoring
- Optimize our professional practice model to demonstrate a shared decision-making, i.e., form taskforce:
 - ✓ Safety
 - ✓ Innovative practices
- Better outcomes for students – make sure our reading, math, and basics are really getting learned at lower levels, and addressing student retention at high school level
- The Merrimack School District is committed to continuing improvement by focusing on results; making decisions that are data based

Strategic Objective #1



Trust.
Excellence.
Service.



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WHAT: Create an annual district report card to track progress on key evidence of school success

WHEN: 1. Board and Administration to decide on key rubric by **Summer 2023**
2. Done annually in May starting **May 2024**

WHO: School Board and Administration

Strategic Objective #2

WHAT: Implement a progress monitoring tool to provide targeted instruction for academic skills, address learning loss, and meet each student's individual needs.

WHEN: 1. Committee created by **October 2022**
2. Committee recommendation for final tool by **January 2023**

WHO: Led by Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

Strategic Objective #3

WHAT: Develop a process for ongoing curriculum updating and revision to include a timeline for each curriculum area

WHEN: Status report **June 2023**

WHO: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum along with committee members

Goal Category #4: Have facilities and equipment that are safe, secure, clean, healthy, current, and appropriate for meeting the educational needs of students and staff

Goal Summary: Create and maintain a responsible 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that addresses current and future needs for: building access and security; network infrastructure and technology needs; space utilization before, during, and after school. The plan will take into account educational programming, enrollment changes, and current projects such as the MHS/Mastricola Complex Master Plan.

The individual goals that made up the category:

- Do a total evaluation of our technology infrastructure to ensure longevity and continued viability for all students and staff.
- Expand, update, improve, and maintain facilities to meet all students' needs

Strategic Objective #1

WHAT: Create a safety committee and perform a safety and security audit

WHEN: Form committee by **September 30, 2022**; audit will need budget so may take longer

WHO: Not Stated

Strategic Objective #2

WHAT: Evaluate technology and create a network diagram to include:

- ✓ Inventory
- ✓ Equipment aging
- ✓ Plans to maintain student devices
- ✓ Plan to maintain operational stability of network

WHEN: September 2022

WHO: Technology Director supported by Administration

Strategic Objective #3

WHAT: Space utilization project

WHEN: End of October 2022

WHO: Administration

Strategic Objective #4

WHAT: Get regular updates from the Town Community Development Office about current and upcoming housing development. What will the enrollment impact be? Be thinking 3-5 years ahead

WHEN: Annually in late October

WHO: Administration

Goal Category #5: Ongoing review of existing policies to ensure they are compliant and in alignment with district practices

Goal Summary: To allow for ease of access to up-to-date, compliant policies for all stakeholders

The individual goals that made up the category:

- As a Board, create a committee to evaluate our district policies and set up a method for ongoing evaluations of them, so that everything is reviewed every couple of years
- Review, revise, and implement policies, practices, and procedures that ensure safety and security of our schools.

Strategic Objective #1

WHAT: Form a subcommittee to develop and implement a plan for ongoing policy review

WHEN: July 2022 – Committee members named; Fall 2022 – Meetings begins

WHO: School Board and Administration

Strategic Objective #2

WHAT: Collaborate with New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) to “red flag” and prioritize policy review and formatting

WHEN: Fall 2022 – initial review

WHO: School Board and Assistant Superintendent of Business Shevenell

Strategic Objective #3

WHAT: Update district website to align with NHSBA “coding”

WHEN: January 2023

WHO: Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen and Administrative Assistant Swanson

Wrap-Up, Recap and Action Plan

The next step following this session will be for Merrimack School District staff to work together to develop specific tactics for accomplishing the identified goals and objectives. **Tactics describe specifically HOW the goals and objectives will be met.**

Concluding Thoughts

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this important process. Primex³ appreciates the opportunity to provide assistance to members with goal setting, and to help governing bodies develop paths to achieve their visions. A forward-looking community that is deliberate, disciplined, and strategic in developing and accomplishing its goals illustrates how “*good management is good risk management.*”