



**WATCHUNG HILLS**  
**REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

# WATCHUNG HILLS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN 2020

## PHASE I ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Submitted by:

Hazard Young Attea & Associates

May 5, 2020

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	Topic
1	Background
3	Method of Inquiry
4	Prior Strategic Plan Initiatives
4	• Accomplishments
5	• Goal Progress
8	• Observations
10	Student Performance Indicators
10	• Student Awards, Recognition and Accomplishments
11	• Achievement Data
21	• Observations
22	Constituent Feedback
22	• Survey Results
23	➤ District Strengths
24	➤ District Priorities for the Future
25	• Feedback from Interviews, Focus Groups and Forums
26	➤ Major Strengths
27	➤ Major Issues and Challenges
27	➤ Major Successes of Strategic Plan 2015-2020
27	➤ Suggestions for Strategic Plan 2020-2025
28	➤ Aspirations for the Future of the District
28	➤ Knowledge, Skills and Characteristics Needed by Graduates
29	➤ Guiding Principles
30	Considerations for 2020-2025 Strategic Plan
30	• Strategic Planning Process
31	• Design of Mission
31	• Future Priorities and Needs

## TABLES

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	AP Courses Offered 2019-2019	12
2	PSAT, SAT & ACT Participation 2018-2019	13
3	PSAT, SAT, & ACT Performance 2018-2019	14
4	SAT Three Year Trend	15
5	National Merit Scholars	15
6	US News and World Rankings of Select Area High Schools	17
7	Criteria for US News and World Report Rankings 2019	18
8	SAT Scores of Select Competitive High Schools Class of 2017	19
9	Mathematics Assessment Performance Trends	20
10	Survey Respondents	22
11	Survey: Top Five Rated Strengths	23
12	Survey: Top Five Priorities for the Future	24
13	Interview Participants	25
14	Focus Groups Participants	25
15	Open Forums	26

## APPENDICES

	<b>Title</b>
A	Survey Results - State of District Item Analysis
B	Survey Results – Priorities for the Future Item Analysis
C	Survey Results –Top Four Priorities for the Future Details
D	Feedback on Greatest Strengths
E	Feedback on Needs, Challenges, Issues
F	Suggestions for Next Strategic Plan
G	Aspirations for the Future
H	Portrait of the Graduate – Personal Traits
I	Portrait of the Graduate – Civic/Social Traits
J	Suggested Guiding Principles-Parents and Community Members
K	Suggested Guiding Principles-Staff Members

# BACKGROUND



Watchung Hills Regional High School District (“District”), located in Warren Township, Somerset County, New Jersey, serves over two thousand students in grades nine through twelve. Constituent and sending districts include the suburban communities of Green Brook, Long Hill, Warren and Watchung Borough.

The majority student population is Caucasian (63%), with the larger portions of its diversity represented by Asian (18%) and Hispanic (11%) populations. (*NJ School Performance Report 2018-19, page 3*) <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/SearchForSchool.aspx>

Stakeholders described the District as high performing and exceptionally varied in academic and co-curricular offerings. The District’s 1:1 technology and STEAM initiatives complement a rich array of academic and co-curricular opportunities including 24 AP courses, 30 interscholastic sports, and 63 clubs and activities. Students regularly excel in academics, performing arts and co-curricular areas bringing recognition to the school at county, state, and national levels. Over 90% of its graduates attend postsecondary institutions. (*NJ School Performance Report 2018-19 pages 44-46*) and School Profile 2019-2020)

[https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1580219762/whrhsorg/gipw5gkszlj48ionywsj/201920SchooProfileReport1\\_28\\_20.pdf](https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1580219762/whrhsorg/gipw5gkszlj48ionywsj/201920SchooProfileReport1_28_20.pdf)

In June of 2015, the District launched its first Strategic Plan, reflecting its hopes for the future. The plan set forth strategic goals and performance indicators developed through a collaborative process involving numerous key stakeholders. This plan was approved by the Board of Education in June of 2016.

Goals were established for three major areas to be addressed over the next four years: (1) Social/Emotional Wellness; (2) Post-Secondary Planning; and (3) Creative, Innovative & Interdisciplinary Learning.

Teams of constituents designed nine major initiatives to implement District goals. These initiatives encompassed several wellness activities for students and staff, expanded and new

opportunities to inform and prepare students for college and careers, and expanded learning opportunities outside of the classroom and through interdisciplinary instruction within the classroom. Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) were formed to facilitate new efforts by staff to inter-connect student learning experiences, and Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLR's) were later designed to inform what students will need to know and be able to do in the future.

As the 2015 Plan neared its completion date, the District sought proposals from consulting firms to assist with revisions and updates. The Board of Education employed the services of Hazard Young Attea & Associates to begin the process of renewing its Strategic Plan in February of 2020.

As in the original planning process, community engagement remained a priority. This engagement was instituted through wide-spread opportunities for input and feedback via survey, focus groups, and personal interviews of ninety-six stakeholders representing the high school and its constituent elementary districts. Additionally, the consultant reviewed data and information regarding progress made from the strategic plan and looked more generally at student performance. HYA based its findings upon themes that emerged across data sources collected during the engagement phase of planning. Results were synthesized to support the revision and re-working of the 2015 Strategic Plan.



# METHOD OF INQUIRY

The first phase of the strategic planning process involved documenting the current state and desired future state of the school district through stakeholder engagement. The Board of Education, administration, faculty, staff, parents, students and representatives with close affiliation to the district were asked to provide feedback on the successes and unfinished work of the prior Strategic Plan 2015-2020 along with suggestions on changes needed as the District prepares its plans for 2020-2025.

The feedback derived from constituents and reflection by District leaders and staff will be used in the next phase to enhance the District's strategic plan and strengthen its planning process. It will guide in the requested enlargement of the current plan with a vision, mission, and portrait of a graduate. Feedback will also be used to refine goals, modify performance indicators and identify benchmarks to track progress. This work is intended to move the District toward its mission and vision for the future.

In the engagement phase of this planning process, priorities for the future and stakeholder satisfaction were measured through an on-survey in an attempt to reach a large sampling of constituents. Simultaneously, focus groups, interviews and open forums were conducted to provide more granular detail regarding key issues and needs.

The primary purpose of this report is to present the findings from the survey and feedback meetings which were structured to gather input regarding the strengths, growth areas, and priorities for the future. The report also provides summary information on the progress the District has made on implementing its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. Additionally, it contains student performance data on select standard academic measures typically applied to similar secondary schools.

The strategic planning process engaged stakeholders ranging from students to citizens at large. Their input provided the opportunity to learn what constituents believe works well in the District and to identify challenges and issues that need to be addressed in the subsequent Strategic Plan 2020.

# PRIOR STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

---

## Accomplishments

---

The District has demonstrated a strong commitment to its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan by making it a priority and using it as a tool for planning and budgeting. It is the basis for annual goal setting at the board and administrator levels.

Supervisors lead department initiatives linked to strategic goals and professional development is designed to support growth in identified need areas across the system. The Administration reports regularly on progress toward goals and performance indicators to the Board and public.

A typical method used to measure progress made from a strategic planning effort is to monitor the degree to which approved plans and activities are implemented. The underlying assumption is that these plans and activities are research-based strategies that will address specific needs and promote achievement of the goals they support.

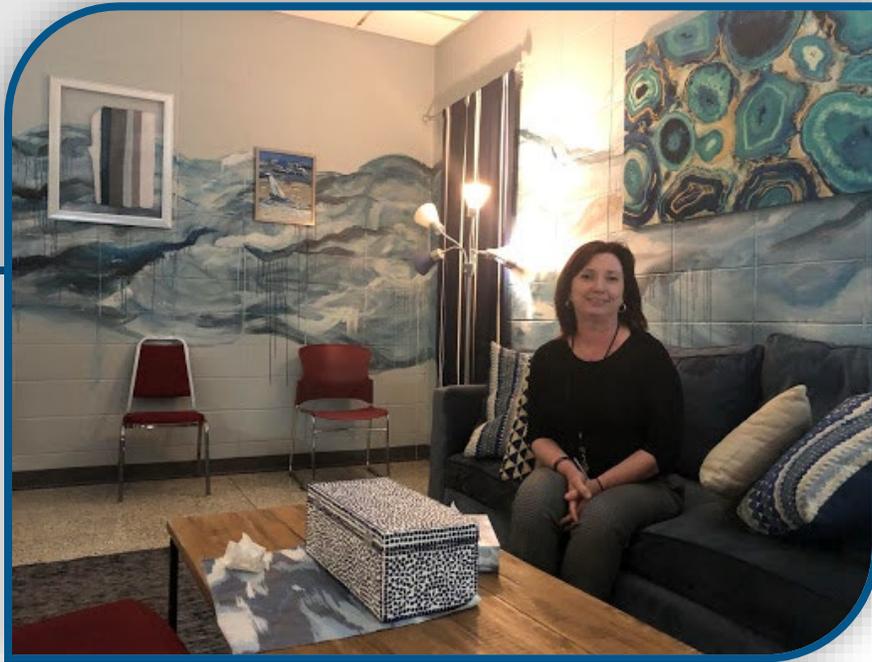
The District used the term performance indicator in its 2015-2020 strategic plan to describe the strategy it planned to deploy in order to achieve a goal. Each performance indicator was supported by activities to be completed during the life of the strategic plan. The goals, performance indicators and the activities that were initiated during the last four years are described below. Activities were derived from feedback sessions and District reports available on the District website at <https://www.whrhs.org/district/strategic-plan/strategic-plan-2015-2020>. (See Reports on Progress dated October 16, 2018; October 15, 2019 and May 22, 2019.)

---

## Goal Progress

---

**Goal 1:** Create and expand programs and services that enhance the social and emotional wellness of all students within a compassionate learning community.



**Wellness Room: Goal #1 Social Emotional Health**

**Performance Indicator 1A:** WHRHS community will increase their awareness of the importance of social emotional wellness for student growth and development through a comprehensive wellness initiative.

**Activities Completed:** A Faculty Wellness Committee comprised of staff from all departments planned a variety of health and wellness activities, many of which were incorporated into lessons by teachers.

**Performance Indicator 1B:** Students will be able to access wellness information through curriculum, presentations, programs, technology, and counseling/health services.

**Activities Completed:** Activities include a variety of speakers on social emotional health in health classes, voluntary counseling services via Care Plus NJ, and student-led spirit activities.

**Performance Indicator 1C:** Two to four times per year, the Wellness Committee will facilitate a district-wide, Healthy Edge Program focused on stress reduction, school spirit, and service.

**Activities Completed:** Based on feedback from faculty this indicator was changed from full day programs to lessons in classrooms infused with Wellness content. Homework practices were modified to reduce overload stress on students including a flex day and expansion of homework free calendar zones. A January 2019 faculty wellness day was also held.

**Performance Indicator 1D:** WHRHS will establish a district-wide Diversity Committee to examine and address issues regarding acceptance, respect, and support throughout the school community and beyond.

**Activities Completed:** The District joined the *NJ Consortia for Excellence through Equity*. A faculty Equity Team and a Student Diversity Council each were formed and meet monthly to plan strategies and goals to promote the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Goal 2:** Build and strengthen support structures that engage students in developing their individual potential, enable students to experience success in high school, and empower students to plan and prepare well for post-secondary learning.



**Senior Dance Ensemble: Goal #2 Post Secondary Planning**

**Performance Indicator 2A:** Ensure that WHRHS provides students with the most suitable academic placements and pathways, articulately communicates students' academic achievement through the grading structure, and teaches students to make informed decisions about their opportunities so that they can engage fully in the college and post-secondary planning process.

**Activities Completed:** Efforts have been made to increase communication with families and counsel students. Programs for 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition and a summer credit recovery have been implemented.

**Performance Indicator 2B:** Strengthen, create, and develop resources and tools to improve communication on post-secondary planning while staying focused on learning and managing the stress that arises in this process.

**Activities Completed:** Expanded activities include college visits, use of Naviance software, experiences in shadowing and interning, and communication with graduates. A senior exit survey is planned for 2020.

**Goal 3:** Integrate creative, innovative, and interdisciplinary learning throughout the district to empower and inspire students to succeed in a changing global community.



**TEDx Youth Event: Goal #3 Creative, Innovative & Interdisciplinary Learning**

Performance Indicator 3A: Develop and implement a set of Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR) which reflect the educational value and high expectations of this learning community for all WHRHS graduates.

Activities Completed: Staff gave input into a proposed list of Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR's) that were aligned for 21<sup>st</sup> C learners. These results, approved by the Board in 2018 are intended to be used to inform revision to curriculum and co-curricular opportunities in the future.

Performance Indicator 3B: Increase opportunities for cross-curricular learning through creative reallocation of time and purpose within our existing schedule and physical plant.

Activities Completed: Flex time was incorporated into the schedule on ten occasions during the year for students in order to accommodate student individual meetings with staff. Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) were established for cross-discipline collaboration. Chromebooks were increased in number to facilitate greater collaboration.

Performance Indicator 3C: Enhance STEAM-related course offerings. Expand innovative opportunities for student learning within and beyond the classroom.

Activities Completed: Courses in cybersecurity, computer science, genetics and arts were added to the curriculum and activities in coding and competitive "hacking" were extended to interested students.

Performance Indicator 3D: Expand our definition of cross-curricular learning to incorporate critical, connected thinking and assess using multiple indicators which may include: GPA, live performance, ethical conduct, community service, career exploration.

Activities Completed: Students were provided opportunities to participate in TEDx Youth and Career Exploration Days along with summer credit retrieval and dual enrollment options.

---

## Observations

---

The District has implemented its plans successfully and made a commendable start in addressing some challenging goals. Constituent feedback indicates that there is considerable interest in continuation of the first goal, Social and Emotional Wellness. There exists some ambiguity regarding this goal among the constituents and questions regarding best practices, but the prevailing sentiment appears to be that it is important to keep working on it.

Several activities have been completed to support the post-secondary planning aspect of the second goal, referred to in District publications in short form as *Post-secondary Planning*. Feedback sessions during the Engagement phase of this process, however, indicated the need to expand efforts related to career pathways, experiencing academic success and developing one's individual potential—also part of the goal as written in its full form-- that the District may want to incorporate into its next strategic plan.

Similarly, goal number three, Creative, Innovative & Interdisciplinary Learning, has taken a while to grow roots in a school, like many others, that has a long-standing departmentalized tradition. The STEAM initiative, also part of this goal, has been more easily achieved, and expanded course offerings in this area receive positive feedback. The interdisciplinary initiative, however, has struggled to find a comfortable or popular entry with staff members. Many factors contribute to a *silo effect* in secondary schools including teacher preparation programs, state and national subject area tests, textbooks, college expectations of curriculum, and even state law and regulation. Educators know, however, that learning can be enriched through interdisciplinary connections and real-life applications. This goal, if continued, will require strategies that address this dilemma.

The goals identified as most critical by the representative strategic planning team in 2015 were worthy and ambitious, but they required changes such as an expanded view of teaching and substantial collaboration among peers from different disciplines. Changing culture is difficult work that takes time to accomplish. The District through several structural changes and allegiance to the strategic plan initiatives has made good, initial progress in this area. More time and effort are needed in order to accomplish them.

Finally, the initial Plan did not include a mission and vision statement which can be helpful in building support and understanding of the need for change. It also lacked specific measures for benchmarking progress toward strategic goals which provide important data about the level of success achieved by initiatives. The next strategic plan will be strengthened by the inclusion of these planning elements.

# STUDENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## Student Awards, Recognitions and Accomplishments

Information regarding student performance was derived from district publications, data available on-line, and the *NJ Student Performance Report*. Specific on-line citations are noted in the text or referenced to one of the two following major sources used:

- *NJ Student Performance Report 2018-19* published on-line by the NJ Department of Education  
<https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/runreport.aspx?type=school&county=35&district=5550&school=050&year=2018-2019>
- WHRHS Strategic Plan 2015-2020 Reports on Progress (October, 2018; October 2019 and May, 2019).

The District provides a plethora of choices in curricular offerings and extends numerous opportunities for students in extra-curricular areas, as well. Students have attained success in academics and in areas beyond the walls of the classroom. The following summary is excerpted from the *Narrative* section of the latest *NJ School Performance Report 2018-2019* in which school administration reports on student awards, recognitions, and accomplishments. It is not all-inclusive, but rather is representative of the many achievements of WHRHS students.

“During the 2018-19 school year, 6 Watchung Hills students from the Class of 2019 were named National Merit Semifinalists. Additionally, 27 students were commended in the competition. All 6 semifinalists were named finalists. We also had a student named one of the Top 300 Science Scholars in the prestigious Regeneron competition for a second year in a row. In athletics, we earned two sectional state championships, as well as three county, two conference, and one district championship. One of our coaches was named Coach of the Year at the district level. Our school has been named to the AP Honor Roll three times and earned the College Board’s AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award.

At Watchung Hills, students develop leadership skills and contribute to the school community through student government, student-run publications, service organizations, academic and problem-solving competitions, and award-winning performing arts programs. Students can select from 65 clubs and activities, including national organizations such as Model UN, Junior State of America, and FIRST (robotics). Students also have opportunities to participate in hackathon and TEDx events, which are organized and run by students. Our culinary club caters many co-curricular events. The clubs at Watchung Hills offers a variety of opportunities for students interested in Academics, Honor Societies, Diversified Interests, Student Government, Performing Arts, Public Arts, Social Justice and Recreation.”



---

## Achievement Data

---

While academic achievement as such was not identified in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan as a specific need and was not included in the goals to be addressed, it *is* monitored by the District to identify any potential issues and to gauge progress over time. The Administration reports annually to the Board of Education. The latest District report, October 15, 2019 *Update on Progress Report*, includes data points on multiple indicators over the last five years.

Additionally, the *NJ School Performance Report for 2018-2019* compares the District’s scores on multiple measures to state averages and reflects the most recent data collected on all schools throughout New Jersey. The District has a high graduation percent (98% for the class of 2019)

with ninety-two percent (92%) of the Class of 2018 having enrolled in college within sixteen months following graduation. (*NJ School Performance Report 2018-2019 pages 28, 30*).

In preparing for higher education, students take advantage of the wide array of District’s AP courses and perform well on the exams. (*NJ School Performance Report 2018-2019 p.17*)

Table 1: AP Courses Offered 2018-2019

AP/IB Course	Students Enrolled	Tested
AP Art—History of Art	13	7
AP Biology	32	28
AP Calculus AB	79	69
AP Calculus BC	38	41
AP Chemistry	38	31
AP Chinese Language and Culture	16	13
AP Computer Science A	23	20
AP Computer Science Principles	128	89
AP English Language and Composition	95	113
AP English Literature and Composition	152	93
AP Environmental Science	41	33
AP European History	37	17
AP French Language and Culture	17	14
AP Human Geography	26	12
AP Italian Language and Culture	0	1
AP Macroeconomics	95	81

This same report shows how students from the Class of 2019 scored on college test measures. The District compares very favorably to State averages on both participation and performance. *(NJ School Performance Report 2018-2019 p.17)*

Table 2: PSAT, SAT, & ACT Participation 2018-2019

This table shows information about participation on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams. PSAT participation is the percentage of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders that took the PSAT 10 or PSAT NMSQT exam in 2018-19. SAT and ACT participation rates show the percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> graders that have taken the SAT or ACT this year or in prior years.

Participation Type	School Participation Rate	State Participation Rate
10th and 11th graders taking PSAT 10/NMSQT in 2018-19	97.2%	84.5%
12th graders taking SAT in 2018-19 or prior years	78.5%	72.1%
12th graders taking ACT in 2018-19 or prior years	43.2%	19.6%

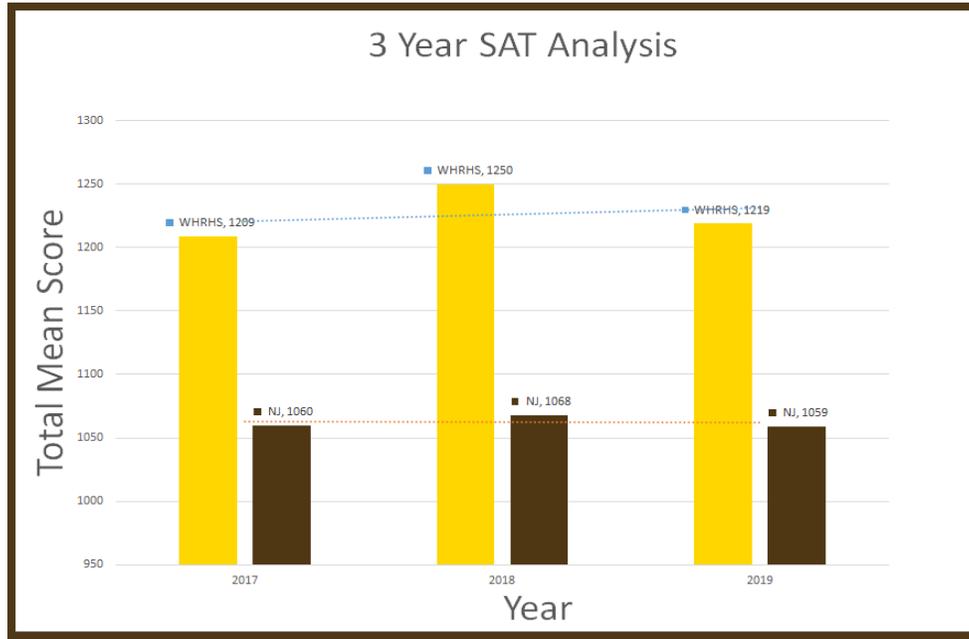
Table 3: PSAT, SAT, & ACT Performance 2018-2019

This table shows how students performed on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT tests by subject area. The table includes average test scores, college readiness benchmarks, and the percentage of students that scored at or above these benchmarks.

Participation Type	School Average Score	State Average Score	College Readiness Benchmarks	School - Students Scores at or above Benchmark	State - Students Scores at or above Benchmark
PSAT 10/NMSQT - Reading and Writing	531	476	Grade 10: 430 Grade 11: 460	81%	61%
PSAT 10/NMSQT - Math	523	477	Grade 10: 480 Grade 11: 510	59%	43%
SAT - Reading and Writing	616	539	480	94%	70%
SAT - Math	612	541	530	79%	53%
ACT - Reading	27	25	22	81%	66%
ACT - English	27	24	18	95%	81%
ACT - Math	26	24	22	78%	65%
ACT - Science	26	24	23	79%	57%

Performance on the SAT exam is frequently used as an overall measure of parents and the media when comparing high schools. The District tracks this indicator and shares those results with constituents. Table 4 from page 7 of the *October 2019 District Update on Progress Report*, shows trend analysis. <https://www.whrhs.org/district/strategic-plan/home> Note: This analysis was limited to three years due to changes in the exam made by the College Board.

Table 4: SAT Three-Year Trend



WHRHS students also have performed well on the PSAT/NMSQT test which they must take in their Junior year in order to compete in the National Merit Scholars program, an academic competition for recognition and scholarships. Table 5 from page 6 of the *Update On Progress October 15, 2019 Report*, reports annual results beginning with school year 2014-2015. <https://www.whrhs.org/district/strategic-plan/home>

Table 5: National Merit Scholars

	Recognized	Commended Students	Semi-Finalists	Finalists
<b>2020</b>	30	26	4	
<b>2019</b>	33	27	6	6
<b>2018</b>	68	53	15	15
<b>2017</b>	46	36	10	10
<b>2016</b>	54	48	6	6
<b>2015</b>	55	44	11	9

In gathering of input and data to assist the District in renewing its Strategic Plan, HYA asked the question “Which two or three high schools, public or private, do you see as major competitors?” Responses varied, but a few high schools were frequently named. Many offered the opinion that parents choose private high schools in lieu of WHRHS because of smaller size, family traditions, and occasionally for athletic opportunities. Some said that attendance at select private schools appears to improve opportunities for those who seek entrance into top tier colleges and universities.

The public high schools most frequently mentioned were Bernards, Chatham and Ridge, but when asked to explain a difference between these schools and WHRHS, responses did not generate specific reasons.

In comparing WHRHS to other high schools, one important factor to consider is its organization as a grade nine through twelve regional school-district vs. a K-12 district. This factor can have significant impact on consistency of preparedness of incoming ninth grade students because control of curriculum and other important inputs rests with different Boards of Education. Coordination and articulation efforts within and among the constituent districts are voluntary.

That being said, it is useful to look at some available comparative data of districts mentioned by WHRHS stakeholders as *competitors*.

There are numerous, highly competitive high schools in New Jersey, and several sources of comparison with varying degrees of validity are available. One source generally respected and frequently quoted is *U.S. News and World Report*, which annually ranks America’s Best High Schools. It uses multiple criteria, including graduation rate, state tests on math and English, and scores and participation of AP exams.

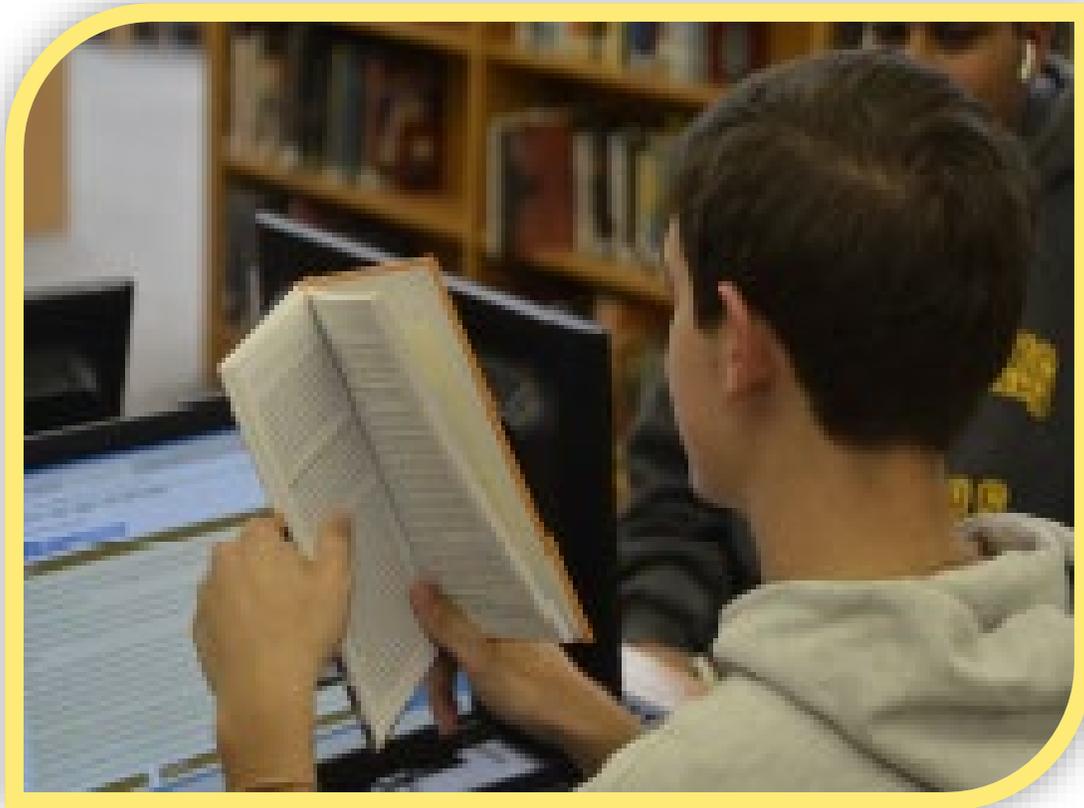
The highest-ranked schools are those whose students excelled on state tests and performed beyond expectations; participated in and passed a variety of college-level exams; and graduated in high proportions. U.S. News assigned numerical ranks to schools performing in the top 75%.

In the 2020 edition of the *U.S. News and World Report*, WHRHS ranked #2281 out of 17,792 high schools in the nation. In New Jersey, it ranked #103 out of the 409 schools that were ranked. Table 10 includes data from the 2020 *US News and World Report* on Watchung Hills Regional High School and three *competitor* districts identified by stakeholders in this study.

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools>

Table 6: US News and World Rankings of Select Area Competitor High Schools

<i>School</i>	<b>National Rank (Out of 17,792)</b>	<b>New Jersey Rank (Out of 409)</b>
<i>WHRHS</i>	2281	103
<i>Bernards HS</i>	1198	52
<i>Chatham HS</i>	570	24
<i>Ridge HS</i>	472	21



According to *US News and World Report*, schools were rated on the following six measures, and the weights used for each indicator are in parentheses.

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/articles/rankings-faq#3>

Table 7: Criteria for US News and World Report Rankings 2020

**College readiness (30% of the ranking):** The percentage of 12th graders from the class of 2017-2018 who took at least one AP or IB exam during high school and the percentage of 12th graders who passed at least one AP or IB exam in high school. Passing is weighted three times more than taking.

**College curriculum breadth (10%):** The percentage of 12th graders from the class of 2017-2018 who took a wide variety of AP and IB courses across the multiple disciplines and the percentage of 12th graders who passed them. Passing is weighted three times more than taking.

**Reading and math proficiency (20%):** Measures how well students scored on state assessments that measure proficiency in reading and mathematics. Passing these assessments can be required for graduation. Examples of assessments include Smarter Balanced in California and STAAR in Texas.

**Reading and math performance (20%):** The difference between how students performed on state assessments and what U.S. News predicted based on a school's student body. U.S. News' modeling across all 50 states and the District of Columbia indicates that the proportions of students who receive subsidized school lunch, are black and are Hispanic are highly predictive of a school's reading and math scores.

**Underserved student performance (10%):** How well the student population receiving subsidized school lunch, and black and Hispanic populations perform on state assessments relative to statewide performance among students not in those subgroups.

**Graduation rate (10%):** For the 2020 rankings, the graduation rate corresponds to the 2018 graduation cohort who would have entered ninth grade in the 2014-15 school year. The high school graduation rates were collected directly from each state along with the math and reading assessment data.

*New Jersey.com* published a list of SAT scores for the Class of 2017 reflecting the highest average scores for the top performing 50 public high schools. Citing the SAT as *the test that could potentially make or break chances of students getting into their dream college*. Statewide, the average SAT score for the Class of 2017 was a 551 in reading and writing and a 552 in math, a total of 1,103 out of 1,600, according to state data. And average scores among the state's public high schools ranged from a low of 795 to a high of 1,502.

[https://www.nj.com/education/2018/01/the\\_50\\_nj\\_high\\_schools\\_with\\_the\\_best\\_sat\\_scores.html](https://www.nj.com/education/2018/01/the_50_nj_high_schools_with_the_best_sat_scores.html)

The SAT scores for WHRSH and its three selected competitor high schools is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: SAT Scores of Select Competitor High Schools – Class of 2017

<i>School</i>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Combined</b>	<b>Rank (Out of 50)</b>
<i>WHRHS</i>	608	604	1212	49
<i>Bernards HS</i>	616	597	1213	46
<i>Chatham HS</i>	627	611	1238	32
<i>Ridge HS</i>	637	641	1278	21

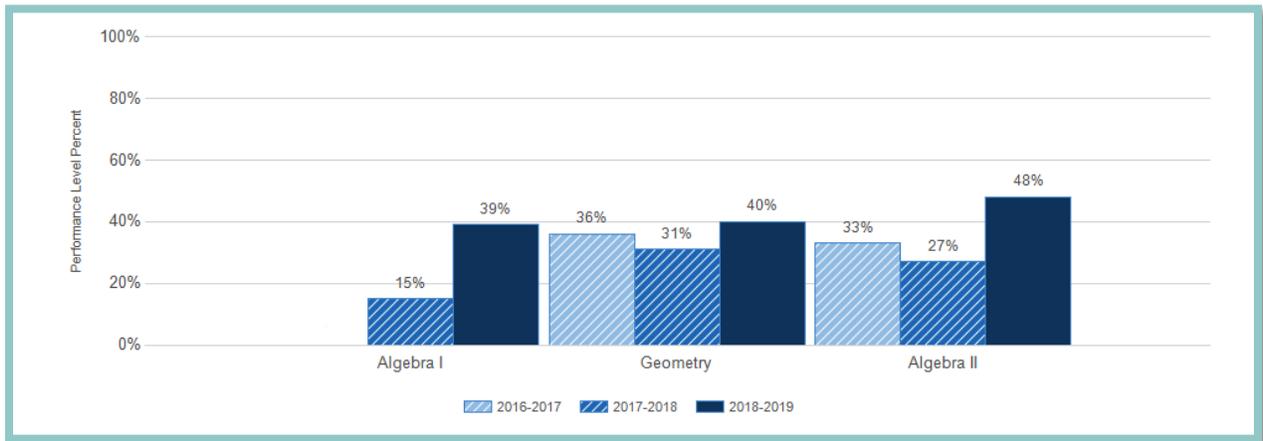
While the *NJ State Performance Report* indicates that WHRHS students perform consistently higher when compared to State averages on most measures, there is one area with an exception in the data—overall math testing for students in grades nine and ten. While WHRHS students met the annual target established by the State, the percentages of testers who met or exceeded expectations (42.1%) was slightly lower than those state-wide (44.5%). This performance area is being monitored by the District.

This NJ State measure has intervening variables for a regional high school; each subject area test is administered to those students who took the course the same year which varies, so the populations across the State varied as well depending on local placement decisions. It is also worth noting that the three-year trend reported in Table 9, indicates positive growth in all three subject areas for 2018-2019, with geometry scores actually outpacing state scores by 5%.

[https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/report.aspx?type=school&lang=english&county=35&district=5550&school=050&schoolyear=2018-2019#Pacd01848b2224ca88966f33a1a1f8531\\_2\\_4188iS9](https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/report.aspx?type=school&lang=english&county=35&district=5550&school=050&schoolyear=2018-2019#Pacd01848b2224ca88966f33a1a1f8531_2_4188iS9)

This graph shows the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations on each grade level or end-of-course exam on the statewide assessment for Mathematics for the past three years as reported in the *NJ Student Performance Report 2018-2019* on page 10.

Table 9: Mathematics Assessment – Performance Trends



---

## Observations

---

In summary, WHRHS students win recognition in many performance areas. They compete favorably with other high schools academically, athletically, and artistically. Academically they perform well above state averages in almost every measure. They do well on college readiness tests including PSAT, SAT and ACT exams and compete favorably in the National Merit Scholars Program. These results indicate that the District provides a strong academic program that prepares its students, most of whom plan to attend college, especially well. Its 2019 ranking within the top quartile of the nation's high schools by *US News and World Report*, which considered additional performance factors, was impressive.



# CONSTITUENT FEEDBACK

## Survey Results

The Engagement phase of the planning process included a State of the District survey. The survey solicited feedback on satisfaction with the *state of the district* and priorities for the future. It was prepared and analyzed by Hazard Young Attea & Associates, who received all data directly. The survey invited feedback from all constituents of the district. It was made available on the district website and was originally available for completion within the first two weeks of March. Simultaneously with the planned closing date of March 18, the District experienced significant disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic and was forced to almost immediately transfer its teaching and learning to on-line under emergency orders of the State. Due to these disruptive conditions during the survey's administration, the deadline was extended and it remained on-line and available to all constituents through April 9, 2020.

During the final two weeks, because an important staff meeting to gather input required cancelation due to the emergency, the Administration invited staff to participate in a modified version of the survey that incorporated seven open-ended questions and two additional options under "Priorities for the Future." The open-ended questions were necessary in order to capture staff input originally planned for HYA's facilitation of a full staff meeting scheduled for March 11. The opinion data from that survey is reflected in the next section of this report: *Feedback from Focus Groups and Constituents*. The number of respondents is reflected in Table 10.

Table 10: Survey Respondents

Administrators	19
Community Members	12
Parents of Students Attending School	242
Students	178
Certificated Staff Members	67
Non-Certificated Staff Members	12
Total Respondents	530

The *State of the District Survey Report* seeks opinions from six constituent groups in two categories: (1) Strengths of the district in twenty areas spanning the categories of Vision and Values, Teaching and Learning, Community Engagement, and Management; and (2) Priorities for the Future in twelve selected areas. Whole group and disaggregated group results are analyzed thereby providing the opportunity to examine opinion differences among the six groups of respondents. Whole group data are provided in Tables 11 and 12 below.

**DISTRICT STRENGTHS**

When asked to rate the district overall, 78% of the 540 respondents rated the district as *good* or *excellent*. When asked to respond to twenty descriptors of the District’s effectiveness in specific areas using a five-point scale ranging from one to five (strongly disagree to strongly agree), the highest ratings (agree and strongly agree) were given to the following five areas:

Table 11: Survey Top Rated Strengths

Top Five Areas of Agreement	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
Technology is integrated into the classroom	84%
District school is safe	81%
The district has high standards for student performance	78%
Facilities are well-maintained	70%
Technology infrastructure is sufficient to support 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning	66%

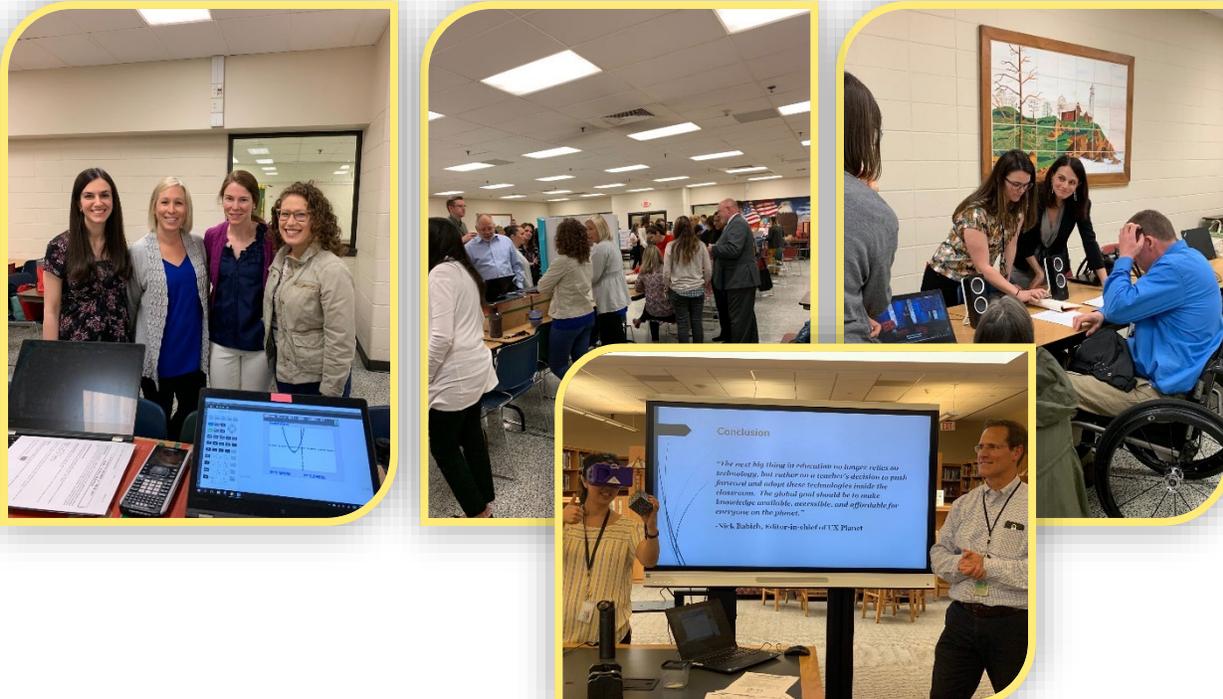
## DISTRICT PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

When asked to select the four priorities they deem most important to the future of the district from a list of twenty priorities, the ones most frequently selected by the 530 respondents, along with the percentage of respondents that selected them, are listed in Table 12.

Table 12: Survey Top Five Priorities for the Future

Top Five Areas of Agreement	% Agree/ Strongly Agree
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff and administrators	34%
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District	32%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse population	29%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	27%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	27%

Disaggregated data reflecting opinion results within each of the six constituent groups can be examined in Appendices A, B and C.



# Feedback from Interviews & Focus Groups

In addition to a district wide on-line survey, the Engagement phase of the District’s Strategic Planning involved several opportunities for constituents to provide input in-person. Sixteen personal interviews were conducted with board members and district administrators. Forty-seven constituents attended seven focus groups designed to solicit feedback from specific groups. An open forum for parents and community members was attended by 20 constituents and twelve attended one of two virtual forums held for those who could not participate in person. Those opportunities are listed in the tables that follow.

Table 13: Interview Participants

WHRHS Board of Education Members	10
WHRHS Superintendent	1
WHRHS Business Administrator	1
WHRHS Principal	1
WHRHS Directors	3

Table 14: Focus Group Participants

WHRHS Supervisors, Directors, Vice Principals	10
WHRHS Students	10
WHRHS Parent Support Group	3
Regional District Superintendents and C&I	5
Regional District Special Education Leaders	5
Regional District Middle School Principals	4
WHREA Executive Board	11

Table 15: Open Forums

Staff Open Forum	*
Community Open Forum	20
Virtual Community Open Forum	10
Virtual Graduates' Open Forum	2

\* Cancelled

The staff open forum was cancelled due to the Covid-19 emergency. Teachers and support staff members were invited to respond electronically to written questions in lieu of the open forum. Written responses were received from 30 teachers and eight support staff members

During the interviews, focus groups and open forums, constituents were asked to provide input on the strengths as well as the issues and challenges the District is most likely to face in the future.

Constituents were also asked their opinions on the successes and remaining work of the current strategic plan, the knowledge skills and characteristics they believe are critical to the future success of District graduates, and their aspirations for the long-term future of the district. Opinions on the principles by which the District should operate in order to achieve its goals and best serve students were also solicited.

Responses to the above questions are presented in summary form below: More comprehensive lists of response from which the summaries were formed can be found in Appendices D-K.

Note: Due to the nature of discussion groups, not all of the above topics were addressed by each person or group that was interviewed. The data in the Appendices therefore may not contain detail by every constituent group.

The following themes and/or frequently expressed opinions within and across constituent groups are listed in alphabetical order:

**MAJOR STRENGTHS**

- Extensive co-curricular offerings
- Expansive curricular offerings
- Professional, committed and caring teachers
- Talented, engaged, motivated and kind students

## MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Addressing curricular issues including course levels, rigor, consistency, grading, GPA, and student access
- Addressing diversity, equity and inclusivity issues
- Addressing the educational needs of the *child in the middle*
- Addressing social, emotional and mental health needs of students
- Improving articulation and student transition from elementary districts to high school
- Improving school climate, culture and spirit
- Offering students more career pathways and *real-life* experiences
- Planning for potential enrollment changes; numbers and demographics

## MAJOR SUCCESSES OF STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

- Acceptance as a planning and budgeting tool for the District
- Increased awareness and emphasis on social emotional mental (SEM) health
- Increased collaboration among teachers
- Generally accepted planning goals

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STRATEGIC PLAN -2020-2025

- Address diversity, equity and inclusivity (DEI) issues
- Address the social and educational needs of *child in the middle*
- Continue and refine work on student social emotional mental (SEM) health
- Cultivate cooperation and collaboration between staff and administration
- Expand career pathways and real-life learning experiences for students
- Grow school spirit and pride
- Modify systems to improve equity and access for students
- Shift the culture from achievement to one of learning within the school community

## ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DISTRICT

### TEN YEARS FROM TODAY, WHRHS WILL...

- Be ahead of the curve in pedagogical and technological practices
- Be a model of equity in education
- Be among the best school districts in New Jersey
- Be a place where all student needs and interests are well served
- Be a place where each student feels valued and connected
- Engage and celebrate all students at all academic levels
- Feel like a family/community
- Produce students who balance academic drive with healthy lifestyles and social responsibility
- Produce future world leaders who positively impact society

### KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED BY GRADUATES

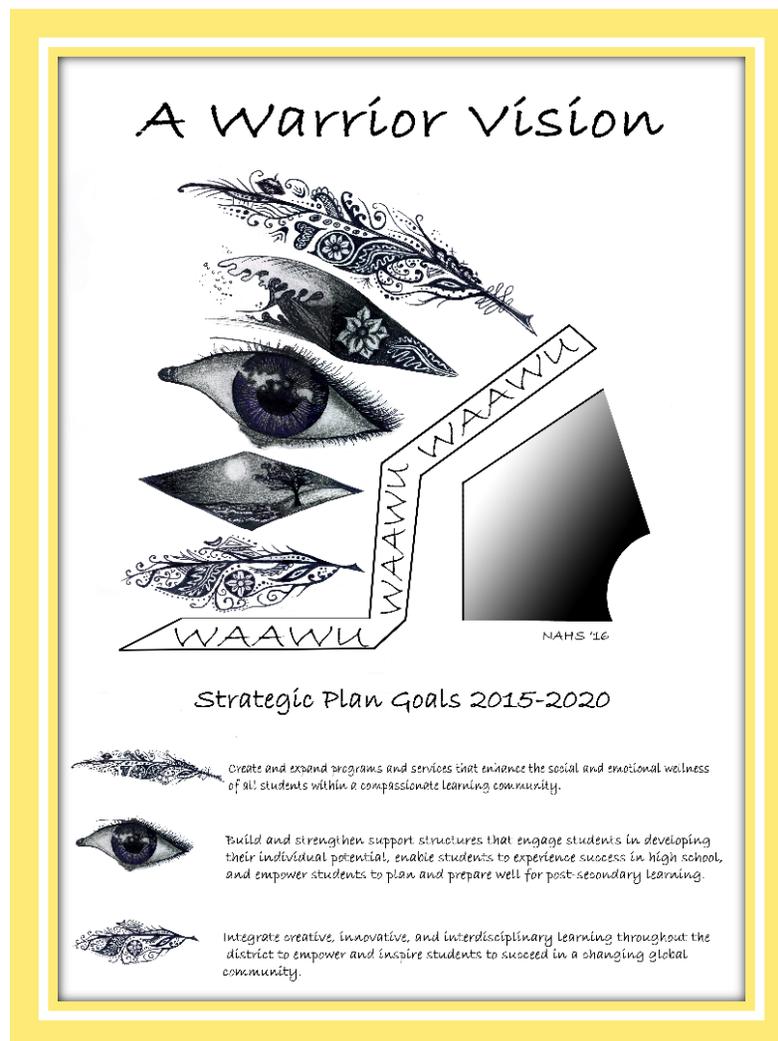
- *Communication*: effective in reading, writing, speaking and listening using multiple mediums
- *Critical thinking and problem-solving*: able to analyze, evaluate, solve emerging or complex problems and make reasoned decisions
- *Learning*: academically prepared, eager life-long learner: able to apply and adapt
- *Personal characteristics*: confident, motivated, passionate, self-directed, and self-controlled; balanced; able to manage stress and self-advocate
- *Practical skills*: organized, resourceful, and mindful; able to manage one's time efficiently and conduct tasks independently
- *Social responsibility*: respectful, compassionate, other-directed, inclusive, caring, and kind; a steward of natural resources and a servant to community



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES (DERIVED FROM RESPONSES TO A DIRECT QUESTION PLUS GENERAL FEEDBACK)

### WE WILL...

- Celebrate student success and stimulate school pride
- Communicate with and actively engage parents and guardians in the education of their young people
- Consider the impact on the social emotional needs of students in making educational decisions that impact them
- Encourage and reinforce dispositions toward civic responsibility and social awareness
- Foster a school environment that based on collaboration, caring and mutual respect
- Guide and prepare all students to pursue their post-graduate plans and careers of choice
- Provide opportunities for students to grow in maturity and independence
- Provide culturally responsive learning opportunities in inclusive and equitable classrooms
- Value each student equally regardless of placement or achievement



# CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

---

## Strategic Planning Process

---

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan will include a vision statement, a mission statement, goals, performance indicators and metrics for tracking and measuring them. It will also include the District's preferred *portrait of a graduate* and a set of principles that the District will stand by in order to support the attainment of its mission and goals.

Phase II of the process, which HYA Associates calls the Focus Phase, takes the District through the planning for each of the above elements with the exception of the design of activities, e.g. action plans, to implement the performance indicators.

During the Focus Phase, a planning team will draft a vision statement, and a mission and either affirm, modify or replace the current goals after review and discussion of feedback data by the Board of Education. This team will then draft performance indicators, which serve as strategies that will help to achieve goals. Current indicators will likely be replaced, but some may be continued if necessary and appropriate.

Activities, e.g. action plans, are scheduled for the Execution Phase, which is the third and final design phase of strategic planning. In this phase, staff will have important involvement as plans and activities are designed to support goal achievement. It is critical that this planning be grounded in research and best practice and yield plans that are sufficiently robust to accomplish the District's goals. In this phase, metrics will be identified to track progress and an electronic dashboard will be designed to share results with constituents. The Portrait of the Graduate and the principles to abide by, begun during Phase II, will be completed by the end of the Execution Phase.

---

## Design of Mission

---

Mission statements take many forms. Traditionally, school districts have created mission statements that identify overall purpose of the organization, what it hopes to do, for whom, and how; all in one sentence. These sentences tend to be long and difficult for constituents to memorize and therefore repeat regularly. A more recent style includes a Vision of one or two paragraphs that incorporates the detail and a Mission that captures the purpose in fewer words.

ECRA/HYA Associates has facilitated planning processes in districts where different versions of the Mission style were used and can work with either model. It is best, however, for the District to decide which style it prefers before entering the Focus Phase, because mission writing can consume significant time and energy of the planning team.

Examples of the two styles are: (1) Montgomery Township, NJ --to empower every student to succeed in a diverse, dynamic, global society by providing quality educational experiences in a caring environment and (2) Laurens County NC School District 55--Empowering and Inspiring All to be Educated and Informed.

---

## Future Priorities and Needs

---

Feedback sessions and the survey indicated to the consultant that substantial interest and/or need exists in addressing curricular issues such as course levels, access to courses, rigor and even grading and GPA.

Interest was also noted in continuing the work on the following challenging but important issues:

- (1) ensuring that members of the high school all respond appropriately and positively to people from different races, ethnicities, and socio-economic status,
- (2) ensuring that the District does not favor the high performing, college bound student, but rather values equally those students with differing career goals, abilities and/or achievement levels, and
- (3) identifying and implementing effective strategies to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of students while also maintaining the school's academic integrity.

The middle level student was frequently mentioned as someone who needs more attention. Some feedback seemed to refer to non-college bound students who require different kinds of courses and educational experiences, while others talked about the average student who may be planning to go to college but seems lost in the system.

Some new areas of concern worthy of examination as the District plans for the future involved the study of demographic changes that the District is experiencing, declining enrollment, fiscal concerns for the future, and exploration of expansion of shared services and/or regionalization.

Students expressed strong interest in working on school spirit, which was also mentioned by other constituents.

Lastly, the feedback indicated that District should examine and respond to concerns regarding communication and collaboration between and among teachers, administrators and parents.

Unfortunately, since the conclusion of this Engagement Phase of Strategic Planning coincided with major disruption from the Covid-19 pandemic affecting schools and society, it is impossible to know how priorities may have changed by the time the District re-opens the high school. This situation makes review and reaction to draft versions of the next strategic plan by staff and others crucially important as the District moves ahead with design and implementation of Strategic Plan 2020-2025. Priorities may easily have been altered by this event.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Judith A. Ferguson, Senior Associate  
Glenn “Max” McGee, President

---

Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates  
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Schaumburg, Illinois 60173

## APPENDIX A: STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

Percentages of parents, students, administrators, teachers, community members, and other constituents selecting 5 (Strongly Agree) or 4 (Agree) for each item are presented below.

	All (530)	Administrator (19)	Certificated Staff/Faculty (67)	Community Member (12)	Non-Certificated Staff/Support ... (12)	Parent Of Student Attending School (242)	Student (178)
<b>OVERALL</b>							
Please rate the overall quality of education in the District.	78%	100%	93%	100%	100%	77%	69%
<b>VISION AND VALUES</b>							
The district provides a clear, compelling vision for the future.	55%	89%	58%	50%	100%	57%	46%
The district is heading in the right direction.	58%	95%	63%	50%	83%	58%	51%
The district has high standards for student performance.	78%	95%	87%	67%	100%	76%	75%
The district makes decisions based on information from data and research.	44%	95%	49%	50%	58%	47%	34%
The district is working to close the achievement gap.	36%	79%	31%	33%	58%	42%	26%
<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>							
The district provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	58%	89%	40%	58%	75%	69%	46%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs, special education and gifted.	51%	79%	84%	33%	67%	41%	50%
District school is safe.	81%	100%	97%	83%	67%	80%	76%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	48%	84%	51%	42%	67%	54%	33%
Students are on track to be college and career ready.	64%	95%	67%	67%	67%	68%	53%
Technology is integrated into the classroom.	84%	79%	85%	83%	83%	81%	88%
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>							
The district engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	43%	84%	40%	50%	50%	52%	28%
There is transparent communication from the District.	45%	74%	30%	50%	58%	53%	33%
The district engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	51%	84%	45%	17%	58%	55%	45%
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>							
Facilities are well maintained.	70%	79%	82%	75%	75%	79%	53%
The district is fiscally responsible.	53%	95%	72%	50%	75%	52%	42%
The district employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	64%	84%	82%	67%	67%	61%	58%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	53%	89%	84%	67%	58%	45%	48%
District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support 21st century learning.	66%	84%	67%	58%	83%	63%	67%

## APPENDIX B: PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE ITEM ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to select 4 priorities they deem most important as the district plans for the future. Results are presented below by constituent group.

	All (530)	Administrator (19)	Certificated Staff/Faculty (67)	Community Member (12)	Non-Certificated Staff/Support ... (12)	Parent Of Student Attending School (242)	Student (178)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	34%	37%	81%	33%	67%	26%	25%
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	32%	47%	21%	42%	58%	44%	16%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	29%	37%	42%	8%	8%	19%	39%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	27%	21%	12%	42%	42%	38%	17%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	27%	21%	18%	25%	17%	30%	28%
Provide transparent communication	26%	16%	49%	50%	42%	25%	17%
Ensure all decisions are evidence-based and substantiated by educational research and best practices	23%	11%	16%	42%	33%	25%	24%
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	19%	21%	13%	8%	8%	15%	28%
Be integrated into community life.	16%	11%	16%	17%	8%	13%	20%
Provide a clear set of outcomes for district-wide curriculum and instruction	15%	21%	13%	0%	0%	17%	14%
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	10%	5%	7%	25%	17%	13%	7%
To document the return on investment that facilities, programs, and other expenditures have on student outcomes	9%	11%	4%	8%	25%	8%	11%

## APPENDIX C: PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE DETAILS

Respondents were asked to select 4 priorities they deem most important to the future of the district. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 4 most frequently selected priorities are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).

 Top 4

	All (530)	Administrator (19)	Certificated Staff/Faculty (32)	Community Member (12)	Non-Certificated Staff/Support ... (4)	Parent Of Student Attending School (242)	Student (178)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	34%						
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	32%						
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	29%						
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	27%						
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	27%						
Provide transparent communication	26%						
Ensure all decisions are evidence-based and substantiated by educational research and best practices	23%						
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	19%						
Be integrated into community life.	16%						
Provide a clear set of outcomes for district-wide curriculum and instruction	15%						
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	10%						
To document the return on investment that facilities, programs, and other expenditures have on student outcomes	9%						

## Appendix D

<b>Feedback on Greatest Strengths Alphabetically Listed</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Parents/Community</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>K-8 Representatives</b>
A/P courses and college preparation	√		√	√		
Articulation with elementary districts		√				√
Competitive high school; good reputation		√	√	√		
Culture of pride in learning and achievement	√			√		
Drop Schedule helps with pacing of work				√	√	
Expansive curricular offerings	√	√	√	√	√	√
Extensive co-curricular offerings	√	√	√	√	√	√
Good facilities; up-to-date				√	√	
Good working relationship between faculty and administration	√	√	√	√		√
Outstanding performing arts program		√	√			
Professional, committed and caring teachers	√	√	√	√	√	√
Relevancy and currency of the program			√	√		
Resources provided to the school		√	√	√		
Safety and security			√	√		
Size of school is a strength; able to serve all students			√	√		
Strong academic rigor, high standards	√		√	√		
Successful sports teams	√	√	√			
Supportive parents and community	√	√				
Talented, engaged, motivated and kind students	√		√	√		√
Technology planning and investments		√	√	√		
Wellness support efforts; Care Plus Program			√	√		

√ Indicates similar comments made by members of the constituent group

## Appendix E

<b>Feedback on Needs, Challenges, Issues Alphabetically Listed</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Parents/Community</b>	<b>Staff (WHREA)</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>K-8 Representatives</b>
Access to electives; who decides priorities?			√		√	
Adequacy of counseling support services		√	√		√	
Articulation and transition issues	√	√	√			√
Balancing academic drive with social emotional needs	√	√	√	√	√	
Better transition to college	√		√			
Changing the culture of achievement to one of learning	√					
College acceptances: rates, schools, SAT/AP testing			√			
Commitment to global issues such as sustainability			√		√	
Community involvement and participation		√	√			
Consistency of rigor and expectations within the faculty					√	
Creating pathways and <i>real-life</i> experiences for students	√		√	√		
Declining enrollment	√	√	√			√
Diversity issues; inclusivity, acceptance, equity	√	√	√		√	
Effectiveness of communication at all levels of the District		√	√	√		
Expanding district programs for special needs				√		√

√ Indicates similar comments made by members of the constituent group

## Appendix F

<b>Suggestions for Next Strategic Plan Alphabetically Listed</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Parents/Community</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>K-8 Representatives</b>
Acceptance, SES and diversity issues need to be addressed	√	√		√	√	
Child in the middle needs more attention and options		√	√	√		
Climate and culture need work	√	√		√		
Develop vision and build more clarity into plan	√			√		√
Diversify the staff to reflect the student body				√		
Educate parents on social emotional health		√	√			√
Engage the school more with the community				√		
Expand STEM opportunities		√				
Explore regionalization	√	√	√			
Goals are good but need more work; more specificity	√	√	√	√		
Homework volume and coordination needs work	√	√	√		√	
Improve methods to collect data and track progress	√	√		√		
Improve staff/administration communication	√			√		
Improve understanding and commitment to the Strategic Plan	√	√	√	√		
Increase guidance and teacher support for students			√			
Involve students and teachers to a greater extent in planning				√		
Make information more easily accessible to parents			√			
More emphasis on practical skills, hands-on or soft skills	√	√	√			
More help for middle level kids who want to go to college		√	√			
Need new plans and strategies	√	√	√			
Partner with colleges and universities		√				
Pathways other than college		√	√			
School spirit and pride need work; students and staff		√		√	√	
Social emotional area still needs work	√	√	√	√	√	√
Students need to learn self-management		√				
Work on collaboration and trust within the system	√			√		

√ Indicates similar comments made by members of the constituent group

# Appendix G

## **Aspirations for the Future Alphabetically Listed**

### **Parents and Community Members**

Be a cohesive school with spirit, mutual support, cooperation; one big community with feeling of pride  
Be continuously striving to become better and better  
Be in the top 10 for NJ  
Become a consolidated school district PK-12  
Focus on students in areas beyond athletics (arts, STEM, internships, volunteer service)  
Have a full-fledged computer science/technology curriculum  
Have adapted to inevitable changes in what our community deems a successful graduate  
Redefine what quality education is  
Shift focus from test scores toward more problem solving  
Stay on the path of being student centered

### **Administrators**

Actualize its potential in all areas  
Be a place where all decisions are made keeping students first by all constituents  
Be the best regional high school in the country  
Be the highest performing on many measures  
Build citizens who will make their communities stronger  
Get the respect it deserves  
Produce students who are compassionate, successful, self-reliant global citizens  
Produce students who positively change the world  
Serve as a vehicle for each student to go in the direction they choose  
Where parents trust us and listen to our opinions

### **K-8 Regional Representatives**

Be a place where kids can grow; get the help they need, feel connected, develop talent explore, learn...  
Meet the needs of all students  
Produce future world leaders

### **Board Members**

A place where graduates look back as the best years of their lives  
Be among the top 10% in NJ  
Be in the top 10 school districts in the State  
Be regionalized with better opportunities for middle school children and more diverse; stronger programs  
Be the place the people choose to send their kids; truly happy and well-balanced; a balance of high achievement and healthy child  
Empower students to take risks and make critical decisions with confidence  
Feel welcomed, contribute, find a path for the future  
Have a reputation for knowing and meeting the needs of students and graduates; use first hand data and analysis...  
No longer be a regional high school

## Appendix G, continued

### Staff Members

Allow its teachers to reach their highest potential by being pioneers in their field. They will try new ideas, spend money on new technologies...

Be a community not known for just its socio-economic status but the good work we provide for the community

Be a district in which all students feel as though they are supported, pushed, and truly feel like they belong

Be a district that provides a great educational experience to all... enriching possibilities to high achievers as well as the average student

Be a district that values all students and works to their success, not just the A/P students

Be a diverse well-rounded educational environment which reaches all kids, not just opportunities for the high achieving

Be a leader in integrating academics with real life opportunities and citizenship

Be a model of equity in education. Students will receive the instruction they need to help them achieve to the best of their ability

Be a school that focuses on each and every individual learner, no matter their ability level

Be ahead of the curve when it comes to pedagogical and technology practices

Be an all-inclusive high school that supports both academics and clubs and sports with equal enthusiasm

Be an example for what high school Arts education can be with a keen understanding of SEL

Be more diverse in all senses of the word...Recruiting...

Be welcoming and have realistic goals for all students (not A/P scores)

Continue to be a high achieving district with more emphasis placed on meeting the needs of underperforming students

Continue to provide students and families with a solid foundation for their futures

Continue to seek out the great teachers and staff who help students grow to their full potential to help shape and change our world for better

Enable students to experience success in high school and empower students to plan and prepare well for post-secondary experiences

Enjoy success in all facets of the school community...to compete with the facilities and programs from the best and most advanced high schools

Excel in providing fundamental technical education that will help graduating students meet immediate needs of the business community

Feel like a family/community again

Have disaster programs in place

Have learned how to engage and celebrate all students at all academic levels

Have opportunities and supports for all students to develop traditional and nontraditional academic skills...more holistic approach

Have the same feeling of collegiality it had 10-15 years ago.

Include a more culturally and racially diverse staff so the students will be able to see themselves reflected in our teaching community

Provide opportunities to include various learners and a smaller population of students who rely on special education

Where comfort and ease of learning would be an underlying theme making school more fun and students more willing...

## Appendix H

Portrait of Graduate Personal Traits	Administrators	Board Members	Parents/ Community	Staff
Adaptable			√	
Balanced			√	√
Confident		√	√	
Coping	√		√	
Efficacy			√	
Empathetic			√	
Empowered			√	
Ethical	√		√	
Ethical	√			
Fearless		√		
Flexible			√	
Grit			√	√
Happy	√	√		
Independent	√	√	√	√
Kind			√	√
Motivated		√	√	
Passionate	√	√	√	
Perseverance	√		√	√
Persistence			√	
Perspective			√	
Reinventive			√	
Resilient	√		√	√
Resourceful			√	√
Responsible	√		√	√
Self-advocate		√	√	√
Self-aware			√	
Self-control		√	√	
Self-directed		√		
Self-management		√		
Self-sufficient			√	
Sense of belonging			√	
Social Emotional Health	√	√	√	√
Spiritual		√		
Well-rounded	√		√	

## Appendix I

Portrait of Graduate Civic/Social Traits	Administrators	Board Members	Parents/Community	Staff
Acceptance	√		√	√
Caring			√	
Citizenship	√			√
Collaboration			√	√
Community minded	√			√
Compassion		√	√	√
Cultural sensitivity	√		√	√
Diversity	√		√	
Empathy	√		√	√
Engaged	√			
Giving	√			
Global awareness			√	√
Good neighbor		√		
Good worker			√	√
Greater good			√	
Inclusive	√			√
Involved			√	
Kindness		√	√	√
Respect for others	√		√	√
Self-less		√		
Service to others	√	√		√
Social Emotional IQ			√	
Stewardship		√		
Team player		√		
Tolerance			√	

## Appendix J

### **Suggested Guiding Principles**

#### **Parents and Community Members**

Be forthright and honest

Be up-to-date with technology, if not beyond

Communicate co-curricular and academic opportunities equally to all students

Educate and involve parents- a parent academy style of discussions

Help students feel like they belong

Empower students to succeed, excel and tackle the next challenge

Help students find their passions

Hold high academic standards with a sense of purpose (why is an A important to me?)

Hold students accountable

Make decisions looking at the whole child

Make learning relevant

Make student-centered decisions

Model inclusivity and acceptance for students

Recognize various types of success

Support individual students in academic, social, emotional and extra-curricular areas

Support students in all paths of achievement

Teach students effective decision-making, goal setting and time management

Use authentic teaching methods

# Appendix K

## Suggested Guiding Principles

### Staff Members

Address serious issues regarding students' mental health and well-being a priority that informs every aspect of our practice, day in and day out (not one-off initiatives)

Be a positive and respectful school to promote overall academic, emotional, mental and physical health of every student

Consider academic success and social emotional stability as both essential in providing education to our students

Consider all students as equally valuable and able to contribute to WH

Consider giving students more leadership opportunities and provide opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom

Consider students on all levels

Consider the emotional toll academic rigor can put on a 15-year-old who is not ready for it

Consider the impact of decisions on all students regardless of their grades and level placement

Consider the impact on both the academic and the social emotional needs of students in making our decisions

Consider the needs of the students and the resources to help them achieve success

Ensure punishments are doled out equally

Expand our definition of cross-curricular learning to incorporate critical, connected thinking, based on the social and emotional needs of the WHRHS community

Find ways to develop a deeper understanding of and more meaningful relationships with each other through meaningful events (assemblies, world cultures day, etc.)

Genuinely get ALL stakeholders involved in important decisions (not just lip service)

Have a faculty and staff that reflects the diverse community we instruct

Have a genuine attitude towards the academic and social education of our students

Include and encourage the Athletes more equally to those in the Arts

Maintain a focus on assessing post K-12 educational opportunities for those students who are finding it difficult to get into 4-year colleges/universities for academic or financial reasons

Maintain sensitivity towards diversity

Make sure we are building inclusive and equitable classrooms and our teachers have the knowledge and tools to provide culturally responsive learning opportunities

Motivate students in meaningful ways

Place more consideration on average learners and their ability to improve and grow

Provide opportunities for collaboration among faculty

Put yourself in the shoes of the person you are serving and treat them as you would like to be treated

Remember that students are decision making individuals and should be held responsible for their decisions

See ourselves as a large public school that can still reach the individual needs of students and celebrate the varied strengths that they have

Strive to be better each day; in the classroom, on the field, on the stage, in the lab...

Support and celebrate the diverse experiences of all members of the WHRHS community

Support one another

Support teachers in developing areas of expertise

Teach the whole student - Academic, Physical, Social, Emotional, School Spirit- Embrace the Warrior Spirit

Treat our students as individuals

Trust in the professionalism and judgment of faculty and staff