

## **What is a Future Search?**

- Created by Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff
- Based on 50+ years of research and practice
- Use in all sectors of society and in cultures around the world
- Engages whole systems in shaping a vision of a preferred future
- Especially good for systems at a turning point
- Can be a powerful community builder
- Is ALL about finding common ground
- Leads to a strategic plan

## **How It Works....**

- √ Interactive
- √ Task and Time Focused
- √ Structured Activities
- √ Table Teams Self-manage
- √ Build a Data Base From Each Activity
- √ Not a Problem Solving Meeting
- √ People Need Not Agree on Everything
- √ People Need Not Wordsmith
- √ Here to Find Common Ground
- √ Provide Vision for a Strategic Plan

## **Who Does WHAT?**

### **Future Search Roles**

#### **Future Search Facilitator's Role**

- Directs the traffic
- Set up the activities
- Keeps the process on time
- Assists the table facilitators

#### **Participant's Role**

- Participates by giving input
- Sticks to time frames
- Focuses on common ground
- Enjoys!

#### **Table Facilitator's Role**

- Manages the table activities
- Follows Judy's directions
- Asks for help when needed

## **FUTURE SEARCH GUIDELINES**

- **All ideas are valid**
- **Everything on flip charts**
- **Listen, Listen, Listen = Respect**
- **Observe timeframes**
- **Seek common ground rather than problem solving/debate**

## **FUTURE SEARCH Mission and Goals**

**January 8 & 9, 2010  
Sabattus Central School**

One Friday, January 8 and Saturday, January 9, 60 people met at Sabattus Central School to come to a consensus on the answer to the following question:

**What would RSU #4 Schools look like if we developed a Pre K-12 system that is responsive to the current and future needs of our children?**

Facilitators Judy Enright and Jake Klochedile led nine (9) table groups. The members of the groups were representatives of students, school staff (teachers, administrators, support staff), faith community, select persons, parents, technology professionals and business owners from each town. The following information was collected through a series of interactive tasks completed by the groups. This information was mined for common direction to be reported in the Executive Summary. Planning Committee will meet on 2/2/2010 to develop a Strategic Plan for RSU #4 to be used to drive decision making and the direction of the RSU.

(Friday, January 8)

**THE PAST:** Historical Scan: What are the key events, trends, people, plans, programs, results, resources in your past?

### **OUR COMMUNITIES**

Brainstorm of the historical events affecting our communities

#### **1970**

Bicentennial in Litchfield

Sabattus, Litchfield & Wales leave Monmouth Academy

Litchfield Food Coop

#### **1980**

OHHS was 4 years old – most progressive school in the state

Sabattus & Wales cheat Litchfield out of 20K

Addition to Wales

Local Schools had strong test scores in reading & Math  
Government and colleges put these down to create need for their services  
Recession of 1986  
Population growth/new development  
Citizens group tried unsuccessfully to get new school to be approved in Sabattus  
Citizens divided by school issues

## **1990**

1<sup>st</sup> Litchfield Comprehensive Plan  
Overcrowding in schools  
Pine Tree League created for our towns to collaborate in sports as well as academic and Fine Arts  
Increase spending in Special Ed programs  
Library created as part of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program  
CCLC After school and Summer Camp  
School burned in Litchfield – New school/community facility & recreation fields  
Ice Storm  
Additional wing at Wales Central School – cafeteria and gym  
Increasing taxes

## **2000**

Sabattus Central School build  
NCLB  
Education Funding Crisis  
Laptop Initiative  
Apprehensive  
Independent Territorial  
Wales loses old rug finally  
RSU formed in 2009  
Not all 3 communities voted to join RSU . One did not support, two did  
Sabattus Turnpike Exit opened  
Need for community library still exists

## **OUR SCHOOLS**

Historical events affecting schools

## **1980**

OHHS – 4 years old  
Teen tobacco use prevalent  
Addition to Libby-Tozier  
Served on School Board  
Federal grant 1.5 million  
Influx of technology  
Wales Central Addition  
Decrease in parental responsibility- related to their children's academic success

Basketball (shorts where shorts)  
OHHS trimesters  
SOS – Litchfield Schools  
1983 – Oak Hill State Football Champions  
1980 - Oak Hill State Baseball Champions  
Common core  
More Drug use  
1984 Cliff year

## **1990**

Increase in unfunded government mandates  
Maine Learning Results  
Literacy Specialists  
Reading Curriculum change  
OHHS budget battle  
Most progressive high school in Maine  
Bob Pelletier – Larry Littlefield  
Citizens increased but school population started to decline  
Movement begins to coordinate curriculum  
21<sup>st</sup> CCLC After school program & Camp 44 created – still successful  
Sabattus Elementary partnered with Credit Union In Adopt-A-School program  
March 4, 1994 – Litchfield Central School burned  
Involvement of community in move to Carrie Ricker Middle School  
Active “Middle Level Concept” in place in Litchfield (model to other schools) for late 80’s to mid-late 90’s. In late 90’s became “defunct”  
Increase development  
Families moving out of Lewiston/Auburn into country towns  
Served 36 years on School Board – 9 years as Selectman  
Ice Storm  
1997 – Carried Ricker Middle School completed and opened – 60 new students + 2 new classrooms + 2 busses  
Maine Learning Results  
My family starts school  
Carrie Ricker School was a model for middle schools  
Wales Central School additions

## **2000**

No Child Left Behind Act  
Autonomy  
Individual – Separate but unequal  
Decrease in teen tobacco use  
Creation of Healthy Me Partnerships & Coordinated School Health Program  
School Consolidation  
Local Wellness Policies required in all schools  
3 Superintendents (SU44)  
3 different Administrative teams (CRMS)

AP classes at OHHS  
School building improvements  
LD 1  
Pre-K – yeah  
RSU formed  
New school SCS  
Laptops  
ME Law: No smoking on school grounds 24/7  
Maine School consolidation  
M.L.T.I. Program  
OHHS Baseball State Champions  
All Day Kindergarten  
2006/2007 Budget battle  
Change to RSU 4  
High taxes  
Musicals back at OHHS  
2009 Big Changes

## **NATIONAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES**

### **1980**

Recession  
Reagan President  
Open classroom student centered learning  
Lake Placid  
Whole language vs. phonics  
Math & Science focus  
Challenger disaster (C. McAuliffe)  
“Nation at Risk”  
Several nations overtake USA with Math & Science  
1986 Recession  
Maine Learning Results

### **1990**

Berlin Wall falls  
A.D.A.  
Peace and Prosperity  
Katrina  
Increased in blended + single family households – 1 income or 2 working parents  
Start of War!  
Unfunded mandates so government official can be elected  
Gulf War  
Global Economy – outsourcing jobs  
www/Internet  
Essential Programs and services used for funding

## 2000

Assessment, Assessment, Assessment  
Budget ouchies  
World Business locally  
Stock market  
Outsourcing – Global competition  
Competitive employment  
Highly Qualified Status Requirements  
Obesity “Driving force for increased need for PE, Take Time, 5210, etc.  
NCLB – decrease in funding for sex ed. – increased focus on abstinence only  
Dramatic increase in childhood obesity  
Decrease in PE  
Flat or decrease funding for school lunch and health ed. Programs  
Increase in Autism  
Concern focused on global warming and green  
Consolidation – helping some communities statewide – hurting others  
“anonymity” lost?  
“cohesive communities” formed?  
Terrorism  
Families moving out of cities into country suburbs  
Country at War  
Y2K  
Community growth and bust  
Google  
You Tube  
Facebook  
Twitter  
Ichat  
Cell phones and texting  
9/11/01  
H1N1  
Obama  
9/11 New security rules  
21<sup>st</sup> Century digital learners  
Info/tech influence  
Economic decline  
Social networking

### **MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FROM OUR HISTORY**

Each table group identified the common themes from history then agreed on the implications to keep in mind as they search for a common future for RSU #4.

#### **TABLE #1**

Change can be okay  
Basics are important  
Communities need to support (financial, emotional, time, communication) the schools

**TABLE #2**

RSU based decision making instead of individual school/town decisions – proactive planning versus reactive planning  
Character education/social responsibilities/life skills: expectations uniform/consistent across RSU  
Equity in programs/extracurricular/scholastics/academics – focus on core mathematics, science and literacy skills

**TABLE #3**

Technology  
Government involvement on education reform  
Funding issues

**TABLE #4**

Cyclical nature of programs economic cycle good times/bad times  
Mandates by Government  
Technology funding/emergence  
Impact on the local community and human relationships

**TABLE #5**

School individualism +/- lack of scope and sequence – conflict competition priority gaps  
Technology Explosion (social network)  
Economic struggles/family dynamics/unfunded mandates

**TABLE #6**

Technology is important  
State and Federal funding regulations  
Community pride and support “When going gets tough the community gets going” three towns comprise RSU now

**TABLE #7**

Changes in education philosophy at state/national – local community – vertical teaming  
Technology – past – early leader – now  
Increase in special education and its costs

**TABLE #8**

There is a history of being territorial between the 3 towns – schools and sports separate but unequal  
Fluctuation in funding and then programs  
Technology

Changes in early childhood interventions data drive decisions

**TABLE #9**

Impact of health and wellness policies on student achievement ex. tobacco and substance abuse, teen pregnancy and obesity – change in family structure... more divorced and single parents

Technology and communications – big changes

Government more involved in running schools – unfunded mandates

**EXTERNAL TRENDS AND INFLUENCES: CURRENT TO FUTURE**

All participants identified top external trends. Number indicates number of participants that rated this item in their top four

**\*More Responsibility on Schools (6)**

Too much emphasis on individual rights vs common good (5)

Parent student Teacher accountability (5)

Too much “political correctness” – where is the common sense (4)

Expected to teach social skills – life skills and educate (4)

RTI (Risk Intervention) – need to... reach every individual (3)

Social family issues (3)

Data driven decision making (1)

**\*Resources Technical Assistance Opportunities Available (11)**

Consolidation of resources/services/staff/curriculum (2)

**\*Technology (23)**

Curriculum Instruction Assessment (1)

Educators need training on latest software to keep pace/current usage (1)

Cyber communication how do schools monitor control/supervise (1)

Too much time on video games (1)

**\*Curriculum Needs to Prepare Students For 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs and Skill Set (8)**

Literacy (1)

**\*Impact of State Budget on Communities (13)**

Return to the basics (12)

Irresponsible spending (2)

Funding (1)

No \$ for teacher training (1)

Schools and families – need to do more with less (1)

**\*Balance on Resources, Education and Time (20)**

Support for Academics, athletics & arts (3)

No phonics need a combinations of methods (2)

Need more time for teachers to assess and respond to data about students (2)

**\*Global Economy and Interdependence (2)**

**\*Changes in Family Dynamics and Values (23)**

Lack of responsibility – students – parents (8)

Parental and student apathy (3)

Need for parent education on how to connect better with schools on homework issues and other expectations (3)

Need to hold children accountable (2)

Lack of student readiness in kindergarten (2)

Kids are coming to school with more needs (2)

Homework – make it count, make it relevant, get it done at school, let parents have their time with their kids, give parents the tools they need (empower them) (1)

Parents lack of time with children (1)

**\*Violence and Drug Abuse (13)**

Lack of respect and responsibility for learning (4)

Substance use as a community issue (2)

Drugs and alcohol (2)

Gangs (1)

**\*Changes in School Structure Due to Consolidation (11)**

**\*Standards Based Education (1)**

**\*Participation of Volunteers (1)**

**\*Too Much Focus on Testing and Assessment Driven Education (3)**

(Saturday, January 9)

**THE PRESENT:**

Groups made two (2) lists regarding education of students in RSU #4. One list for those things members were proud of and one list of things they were sorry about.

**PROUDS**

Tables were divided into stakeholder groups of **no more** than eight (8). Bold items are the top items all could agree on as items they were proud of.

**Stakeholder Group #1 - School Personnel**

**Positive Student Centered Culture**

**Strong community support and commitment for schools and students (ie. Future Search, budget meetings, buildings)**

**Education Program improvements such as CORE, Pre-K, early treatment etc. school based improvement plan (CIPS) plan**

Improved reading instruction/performance

Being part of team of staff providing stability during RSU transition

Hard work currently doing to improve RSU

How K-8 teachers shared honestly during CORE process  
Dedicated staff  
Community support for school at town meeting indicates confidence  
Daily efforts of staff on behalf of students  
Respectful manner of the community's over discussion of subsidy loss and possible school changes  
Use of NWEA data to drive instruction  
Pre-K program early treatment  
Welcoming tolerant students/staff  
The Future Search – building community support – diversity and commitment of attendees  
Buildings  
Professional development draws on in-house expertise  
Nutrition program improving

## **Stakeholder Group #2 - School Personnel**

### **Dropout Prevention**

### **Reading Core Curriculum**

### **Facilities**

### **Incidental Benefits**

Reading Core Curriculum  
Student's tolerance for differences  
Breakfast program  
Reading Literacy Groups in Litchfield  
New advisor/advisee program at OHHS  
A Team remains effective in spite of changes  
Happy to be part of committee  
Facilities maintenance  
Parents and Students greeted in a.m. by staff  
Incidental benefits  
Lucky to be able to work with students  
Camaraderie among staff at OHHS  
District wide advocating for dropout prevention  
Infinite campus is off and running  
Superintendent more visible  
REACH  
Laptops 7-12  
Flexibility in student programs  
Caring environment  
Increased technology K-6  
Litchfields Music program  
Pre-K

## **Stakeholder Group #3 – School Personnel**

### **Maintain focus on students despite challenges**

### **Continual effort to improve services to students**

### **Pre-K Programs**

Educators that have stuck through the “thick and thin” (mostly thin)  
G/T in Sabattus & Litchfield  
Caring educational communities  
Getting Sabattus Central and Carrie Ricker  
Started CORE process  
Strength to disagree in a professional manner  
21<sup>st</sup> Century grant – library  
Get through turmoil of RSU development  
Willingness of most to step up and do what needs to be done, when asked and/or when not  
Special Ed services – official (IEP’d) and unofficial (incidentals)  
A Team efforts in the configuration/budget process  
We can all laugh even after all the crap we’ve been through  
We have supportive colleagues and administrators even after the way we treat each other at times  
PLC’s, PLG’s, Literacy groups, cross grade level programs/initiatives  
Our histories/cultures

### **Stakeholder Group #4 - Parents #1**

#### **Future Search Experience**

#### **Condition of Facilities**

#### **Recreation Departments**

Parent support (events, fundings, etc.)  
Open communication

### **Stakeholder Group #5 - Parents #2**

#### **Personal attention from administrators (K-8)**

#### **Communication with teacher/teacher teams**

#### **PE twice a week, language, science, extra gym, music (L), art (L), drama (L)**

#### **Small classes (some)**

To be here  
Curriculum at middle school  
Technology support for special ed reading/writing  
Move to all day K & ½ day pre-K  
Volunteers welcomed  
G/T classes (advance placement)  
Anti bullying movement (S), Civil Rights (L)  
Recreation programs  
Guidance program  
Crime rate low K-8  
More emphasis on going to college – K-8  
Morning meeting  
Friday Fun  
Teachers give extra time – extra curricular

## **Stakeholder Group # 6 - Municipal #2**

**Consolidation and collaboration for savings and improvements**

**Opportunity to work for needs, wants balance**

**Need to recognize strengths of small community schools**

New Sabattus Central School – many opportunities available

District has improved image

Early education separation helps development

Community service requirement

## **Stakeholder Group # 7 - Students**

**Advance classes**

**Extra Curricular Activities**

**Teachers want to be there**

Sports

Electives

Laptops

Big brother/big sister

## **Stakeholder Group #8 - Community – Non Profit**

**Common ground/coming together**

**School Committee willing to listen regarding reorganization**

Small community atmosphere

Strong school spirit

RSU #4 formed School Health Leadership Team

Good community commitment to sports program year round

Advanced in technology in schools

Student academic achievements K-8

Litchfield schools take advantage of wellness programs

## **Stakeholder Group #9 - Faith Community**

**Compassion of Staff for Students**

**Caring attitudes among staff for each other**

**Many parents involved with school**

Willingness of school bands to perform in churches (music groups)

Success of many of our students with college and career

## **Stakeholder Group # 10 - School Board/Municipal**

**Attacking change**

**Embracing technology**

**Balancing education w/fiscal responsibility**

Schools and students accomplishments

Support of arts programs, G/T and At Risk

Volunteerism/community involvement

Retain what we have – build unit  
Facilities

## **SORRIES**

Stakeholder groups identified what they were sorry about. Bold items are the top items that they agreed on that they were most sorry about.

### **Stakeholder Group #1 - School Personnel**

**Failure to meet need of some of our students including disenfranchised students**

**Economic downturn occurred at same time as RSU**

**Lack of mission/vision that drives decision making**

CIPS math

No “Home Ed” and “I.A.”

Being part of a budget process that will impact negatively

Don’t have time to volunteer at school

Don’t purchase texts to support teachers and students

Not enough rigor

Undervaluing academics by some students

Rumor mill is damaging

Lack of time to interact with students

Funding priorities of various groups

Having to operate in “damage control” leadership mode because of economy

Not using in-house expertise enough

Nutrition program needs to continue to improve

### **Stakeholder Group #2– School Personnel**

**Students that we could not save**

**Community is not as aware as they could/should be. They could offer a lot if we, as school personnel, did a better job at Public Relations**

**Allowing non-student issues to interfere with delivery of services (academic and extra-curricular)**

Loss of community library

Inequities of resources in our schools

Teachers Unions not as effective as they could be due to preoccupation with non-essential non-educational items

Education being funded by local property taxes

Investigations in K-5 as only math method

Inflexibility and ignorance displayed by personnel

That today and yesterday was the first time that all 3 communities have had the opportunity to get together to discuss education

Seeing the negative rather than the positive in students and staff

Unwillingness to listen/share/understand others experiences

Non existence of community service/learning program

Climates, attitudes, interactions

### **Stakeholder Group #3 - School Personnel**

## **No Money for Professional Development**

**Lack of academic success – promoting unprepared students, no academic afterschool program, lack of time for individual students**

**Revise academic eligibilities for sports**

Less and Less time for fun

Negaholics

Administration has too many closed doors (not accessible)

Behaviors big issue in classroom takes away from instruction

Sorry that Sabattus and Wales don't provide OHHS late bus

Lack of time to collaborate with colleagues

Students judged by how their older siblings were

More time to go to meetings to form RSU #4

Violence and drugs perception by students

IC took away from other things

More alternative programs for grades 8 & 9

No money to keep programs and staff because of state funding

Lack of time to train staff and students to use laptops

Students promoted who are unprepared

Too much testing

Lack of positive support

## **Stakeholder Group #4 – Parents 1**

**Past town hx. (territories)**

**Once in H.S. breakdown**

**Lace of common culture**

Lack school volunteers in lower grades

Individualism for students

## **Stakeholder Group #5 - Parents 2**

**Parent participation**

**Lack of RSU unity**

**Student attitude toward each other coming together at OHHS**

**Personalized attention to each students needs and strengths – special ed – average-g/t (whether they test correctly or not)**

Everything comes down to money

Cuts to extra programs

Food

Lack of communication from primary to next school

School sports programs build comp programs

Kids/small class sizes few peers to make friends with

Middle kids at OHHS need more elective choices

Expose kids to real world

## **Stakeholder Group # 6 - Municipal 2**

**Some students are not reaching personal performance levels “society issues”**

**Some desertion remains between our towns**

**Budget problems keep driving property taxes out of control**

Lack of community involvement in all aspects

Lack of money caused decrease in programs

Bullying

Senior Portfolio Project

### **Stakeholder Group #7 - Students**

**Violence**

**Inconsistent**

**Lack of home support, lack of responsibility/motivation**

Bullying

Drugs

Gangs

Little G/T

Lunch

No fail – fail

Aging schools

### **Stakeholder Group #8 - Community – Non Profit**

**Potential closing of community school in Wales**

**Lack of participation among community members regarding school issues**

Underutilization of technology

Lack of RSU – School Health Coordinator

Stress of budget cuts

Younger students concerns about relocating to different schools

Unable to pass model tobacco and wellness policies

Lack of project based problem centered, community projects

Unrealistic state regulations

School doing parenting

### **Stakeholder Group #9 - Faith Community**

**Strayed from Christian principles that USA was founded on**

**Lost right to pray and express Christian values**

**Lack of programs to help various family groups**

Lack of balanced community involvement

School activities on Sunday

### **Stakeholder Group #10 - School Board/Municipal**

**Lack of unity intra-district**

**Lack of parental responsibility/accountability**

**Volume of testing**

All students = college?

Lack of focus on individual strengths/skills  
Influence of sports in education  
Lack of community understanding of the cost of education  
Change has taken so long  
Not enough volunteerism – lack of role models  
Non-standard curriculum  
Intra-district inequality  
Impact of political correctness (individual rights vs. common good)  
Does more money = better education?  
School day – abbreviated time management

### **THE FUTURE:**

Participants back in table groups visualized education in RSU #4 the way they really want it to be in the year 2015. They brainstormed lists of Guiding Beliefs & Principles and lists of Key Programs, Practices and Initiatives that they say work in RSU #4 in 2015.

### **GUIDING BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES**

#### **TABLE #1**

**Responsible, ready, educated students**  
**Equity to all students (academic and extra-curricula) with help assistance**  
**Maintain and educate certification for all staff**  
**Safe environment for students, staff, community, volunteers – respect ideas**  
G/T enrichment for all interested students  
Family supports (counseling/clinics, social work)...  
All 3 towns agree to focus on what's best for kids, schools  
Review Future Search each 3<sup>rd</sup> year to start planning for next 5 years.  
Kids are empowered to set goals/motivation/responsibility/com/teachers/parent support  
Low dropout rate  
Celebrate achievements  
All parents get into schools to support at least in some capacity to see what is happening  
Lunch programs health  
Kids are ready for life's challenges  
Prepare for coming trends (tech, social, health)  
Adequate resources shall be provided for the success of the students and staff  
Each student shall achieve their academic potential  
Each student shall be allowed to express their ideas/opinions without fear of negative  
Peer action  
Aspirations  
Diversity Celebrated and encouraged  
Locally controlled  
State/Federal regulations

## TABLE #2

**RSU and school based decision making is truly guided by our principles and beliefs even during difficult times.**

**Education programming which emphasizes necessary life skills and it's application. ("How to learn", "How to access", "How to utilize").**

**Students will be treated equitably and be offered programming which meets their individual needs at their highest level mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally.**

**Shared responsibilities – teacher, parent, students and community accountability.**

**Community and school members together providing educational programming (academic and extra-curricular) in a safe and nurturing environment which allows all students to work towards and attain their individual maximum potential**

All students will be given the opportunity to achieve at a high level

Education about learning with an emphasis on application

Education for life

All students to reach their potential more than just academics (athletics, drama, band, clubs)

Support (emotionally and financially) for staff resulting in a positive school culture/climate in an effort to affect school success

Curriculum that teachers "how to learn", "how to access education/information", and "how to apply knowledge"

Opportunities to inform/educate parents how to reach/teach/deliver education to their children (EMPOWERMENT)

Increased community involvement and relations

Continue advanced programming as well as integrated/functional/lifeskills/technical programs

Minimize distraction/disruptions to learning = effective discipline

Alternative means of demonstrating acquire knowledge

All communities equally represented in all aspects of education

Bigger focus on nutrition and health – HEALTHIER CHOICES

## TABLE #3

**Resources will be more fairly allocated among the entire student population to ensure that all students graduate ready for the most post-graduation opportunities possible.**

**Positive relationships are important (parents, students, community, staff and administration)**

**Safe, drug free environment**

**RSU become competitive with other districts**

**All students have equal learning classes (G/T, AP, voc, tech, arts, etc) supporting multi-pathway curriculum in which all aspects of education are supported**

**More instruction time, more days, longer school session**

Education higher priority then sports

Program caters to students and not one size fits all

Everyone in community involved in the community

Better equality of teacher resources throughout community

All students educated to their FULL potential not expectations

Teacher attitudes are student centered  
 Students in safe drug free environment  
 Students can trust their teachers  
 Support multi-pathway curriculum  
 All aspects of education are supported  
 Parental involvement in academics  
 Group students by readiness not age  
 Classroom haven for learning with actively engaged students  
 Technology integrated and no longer an issue  
 Life long learning through continual education  
 Strong school/community partnership  
 School personnel treat all students fairly and do not accept failure  
 All students have access to academic social support they need

**TABLE #4**

3 towns come together as a “Community” incorporate all citizens from the community not just students/staff. Include: businesses, churches, seniors, etc.  
 Rename the community to represent the 3 towns  
 Self directed (community not state) schools.  
 All students graduate ready to compete (further education or skills for earning a living  
 No one has the right to stop a student from meeting their educational potential  
 Money resources more fairly allocated to whole student population  
 Restrained/controlled progress/change  
 Curriculum for all students will be coordinated vertically/horizontally K-12  
 All students have a right to an education  
 Education is a partnership – parents to students to school to community – responsibility defined  
 Education should prepare students for as many post graduation options as possible  
 School as a lifelong community education center – not something to escape at grade 12  
 Every student will be challenged on their own level  
 Low drug abuse, crime, teen pregnancies  
 Every student to have an interest in extra curricular activities (sports, arts, community involvement)  
 Comprehensive  
 Excellence, quality, standards minimum aspirational  
 Less emphasis on age-based cohorts  
 Education is a partnership with clearly defined responsibilities for
 

- a. Parents
- b. Students
- c. Schools
- d. Community

 Resources will be more fairly allocated among the entire student population to ensure that all students graduate ready for the most post-graduation opportunities as possible  
 Every student will be challenged on their own level  
 Safe environment

**TABLE #5**

**The learning community is restructured to allow for flexibility in the daily schedule. This would allow for options in instruction, sports, work, learning styles, with flexible groupings to match student needs and interests.**

**We believe that all participants in our learning community has the right and the responsibility to thrive, excel, and reach their individual potential.**

**It's all about the kids, right?**

**This learning community is: safe, respectful, inclusive, nurturing and non-judgmental**

#### **TABLE #6**

**We believe in an education system that teachers students to advocate for themselves**

**All students leave school prepared for their future**

**We believe that students/parents/community and staff share responsibility for student achievement**

**Safe environment for all (harassment free)**

**We believe all students deserve a safe and supportive learning environment**

**All students deserve an equitable education**

Community/parent involvement is essential to student learning

Instruction must be designed to meet the needs of the student

That all communities should be unified under the RSU

#### **TABLE #7**

**RSU #4 will become a learning community that:**

**Provides adequate facilities**

**A safe learning environment**

**System wide, coherent, rigorous curriculum**

**Provides all students with an equal opportunity to reach their potential**

Safe environment for students and staff

RSU #4 will become a community that provides the facilities, programs, curriculum and expertise to allow all students to reach their potential

Communication and information shared across the RSU #4 community (open communication among/between students, staff and community members)

RSU #4 will provide equal opportunities to all students

#### **TABLE #8**

Equity of all students being able to reach their potentials

Communication is open and honest

Teachers and students learn in different ways and at different rates

Community and children and staff need a safe caring environment

All towns work together for the good of the students

Facilities are well maintained and conducive to learning

Technology used by students and staff

Students can demonstrate what they learn in various ways

Standards based curriculum/students progress as they meet standards

Building community through social networking  
Teaching and learning is meaningful and relevant and prepares students for the future

#### **TABLE #9**

Harassment free safe environment for everyone  
Academically challenging – rigorous  
All seniors will be well prepared to further their education (no college remedial programs required) or apply for, enter, and succeed in the job market  
Equitable opportunities targeted to individual student strengths or weaknesses  
Quality education for all students  
All students fit healthy and ready to learn  
Equitable opportunities for everyone  
All students and parents aware of grade level expectations and how to meet them  
Parents, non-parents, educators are invested in the education of our youth  
Grade level expectations and how to meet them are clearly defined and communicated

### **RSU #4 POSSIBILITIES: POTENTIAL PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, POLICIES, INITIATIVES, ACTIVITIES**

#### **TABLE #1**

**Remedial programs at all levels**  
**Academic offerings for students**  
**Aspirations awareness**  
**After school academics & extra-curricular**  
**Teach basics/core academics**  
Grant writers (staff, G/T kids) to try to compete and qualify for money  
Vocational awareness with all 1<sup>st</sup> year students at high school and their core academics 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> year  
Continue of Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
Focus in high school with prep for college, vocational, non vocational futures  
Coaches that are all fair  
Day care for teacher's kids  
Community shares talents/vocations to open awareness of opportunities for kids Local business for help w/learning  
Curriculum development, teaching how to use the material prior to implementation of the curriculum

#### **TABLE #2**

**Collaborative decision making (community/school, parent/school, school/school, grade/grade, teacher/student, teacher/teacher)**  
**Programs which support student accountability – schedule time for assistance (advisor/advisee, student goal setting, student led conferences)**

**Continuation of all intervention services (JMG, Spec.Ed., Title One, Day Treatment, RTI, Alt. Ed.)**

**Peers assisting programming (conflict resolution, Civil Rights, Day Treatment)**

**Opportunities for all... (sports, intramurals, clubs, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, etc. )**

Professional Learning Communities (PLC's, PLG's)

Block scheduling with practice time built in for 6-12

Student government – “Let our voices be heard”

Response to Intervention (RTI) – meet needs of all students (data drive – individual)

Uniform/Basic Skills/Standards for all students (handwriting, literacy, life math, etc.)

Expanded programs/areas for accelerated students to apply skills (academics and beyond, leadership, arts, psychomotor)

Expanded opportunities for activities, clubs, organization

Taking advantage of all opportunities to celebrate (concerts, plays, games, literacy/math events)

Accessibility/Open Door policy for access to administration to deal with issues/concerns/praises, etc. (for parents, students, community)

Continuation of early intervention services (Pre-K, CDS)

Smooth, seamless transitions between schools

Guidance/Social Services

Unified Arts – foreign languages

### **TABLE #3**

**Instruction actively engages through enthusiastic teachers**

**Energy efficient buildings**

**Multiple communication methods**

- **open portal**
- **website**
- **newsletter**
- **TV**
- **Social networking**
- **email**

**Adult support system for students (3-12)**

**Opportunities to support and further student involvement**

Equity of Programs – G/T, AP, vocational, tech, arts, at risk programs (REACH, advisor/advisee, academic intervention)

Extra-curricular/co-curricular

Standard RSU wide curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Consolidation

- regionalized PreK-2
- combined 3-5
- combined 6-8

Fully functional new real time website for communication with parents/community

Better infrastructure (technology) between schools and community

Planning instruction that actively engages students through enthusiastic teachers

Best working conditions – respect ideas, don't be defensive, listen...listen...listen, have fun, encourage, agree to disagree, no pressure, many ideas, group effort (no single mind)

#### **TABLE #4**

A 3 community 6-8 school  
More work needed to determine most effective pre-K -5 model  
Administrators/staff will be hired, retained and compensated based on merit and effectiveness (non-union)  
Programs and activities for all students to meet goals and be successful  
Recognize individual learning styles and multiple intelligences  
Include academics, arts, athletics, altruism  
Strong core fundamentals augmented with technology  
Moderates, well-rounded extra-co-curricular programs  
6-8 middle school, 3-5 intermediate school, two or three pre-k-2  
Foreign language K-12  
Before and after school services  
School will go year round  
Programs will be flexible and varied to meet needs  
Keep Pre K-5 in same towns as they live in  
Make a 6,7, 8 grade school  
Move superintendent office to one of the schools  
Strong sports programs

#### **TABLE #5**

**Administration/staff will be hired, retained and compensated based on merit and effectiveness (non-union)**

**There is a focus on community service and involvement in Pre-K – 12 with multiple opportunities for career exposure and exploration across all grades**

**Programs and activities for all students to meet goals and be successful**

**The school board will be made up of members who are knowledgeable research based educational about practices, are committed to our GP + B, follows a respectful protocol, listens and considers all, and meets and demonstrates highly qualified requirements in order to serve, with the expectation of time served in the classrooms/schools**

**All three (3) community 6-8 school**

**All students succeed in core curriculum and those who struggle or fail will have access to multiple intervention opportunities**

The learning community is restructured to allow for flexibility in the daily schedule. This restructuring would allow for options in instruction, sports, work, learning styles, with flexible groupings to match student needs and interests.

Community service Pre-K-12

All members feel emotionally and physical safe

Career exposure is included in all grades

Students at risk are caught early and often to ensure mastery

Every student has a mentor/caring adult to guide their academic and emotional well being

Communication and support expectations are the same between school and home from pre-K-12 grade

All stakeholders are invested in 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning

## **TABLE #6**

**Individual Education Plans for students (includes extra-co-unified arts parent programs)**

**Use of data to drive student achievement and instructional decisions**

**Regular communication between municipal and school officials – 3 towns and school**

**Consistent programs and TAUGHT curricula across RSU**

**Professional development programs that address student needs (instructional practices/bullying, suicide prevention/violence)**

Life skills should be taught: ex. checkbooks, budgeting, healthy living, consumer awareness, credit

Individual education plans for each student

Community school newsletter

Community service requirement for graduation

State and government supports mandates

Program, curricula, text reviews and revision regularly

Extra curricular programs

Co-curricular

Art/music/PE – Partnering Parents

## **TABLE #7**

**Dropout prevention program/alternative transitions between 8-9**

Programs that address all learning styles

Plant operations that minimize fossil fuels

Reorganization

- 3 buildings (HS, MS, PS)
- 3 building principals
- 3 building vice principals

Maximize use of technology

Forming a “safety” committee

Communication vehicle across RSU #4

Share programs, practices, concerns, inclusive of all citizens

Rigorous curriculum, wide variety of extra-curricular programs (performing and creative arts)

Accessibility of administration

RSU newsletter, web sites, use newspapers

Athletics across RSU coaching, no cuts in middle school

Project based, community projects in all towns

## **TABLE #8**

Corporate sponsors programs

Professional development fully funded

Early intervention for students and parents

Support in classroom

Quality school lunch/breakfast

Parenting programs for students and adults  
 School health clinics  
 Manageable caseloads for school counselors Pre-K-12  
 Fully supplied classrooms and libraries  
 Foreign languages and culture in elementary and middle schools  
 Internship programs students/teachers  
 More individualized (personalized) instruction on line learning  
 More volunteers community involvement  
 Students getting involved in community  
 Service learning in classroom – real life problem solving  
 Career pathways (earlier, better identification)  
 Continuing to engage parents PreK-K-12 – hands on  
 Small class size  
 Afterschool learning programs  
 Art, Music, P.E., Drama  
 Using technology to reach beyond the classroom

**TABLE #9**

Lifeskills training curriculum – training fully implemented  
 Farm to School Program Implementation  
 RSU 4 School Based Health Center  
 Agriculture in the classroom  
 Service learning implemented RSU wide  
 All students receive nationally – recommend # of minutes of PE  
 School Lunch Program exceeding federal nutrition guidelines  
 No food based fundraisers or food as a reward  
 RSU personnel model healthy behaviors  
 Daily physical activity outside recess & PE  
 Continuation and expansion of technology in classroom (laptops in all grades)  
 RSU school spirit initiatives – encouraged  
 Parent workshops focused on core subjects and methods used  
 Comprehensive tobacco, substance use and well ness policies  
 Open campus  
 Maintain special ed programs to meet current needs  
 Advisor-advisee programs (6-12)  
 REACH program continued and expanded  
 Availability of college classes for high school students (9-12)  
 Initiate strong volunteer program  
 Student to school nurse ratio met  
 High school more career oriented – what’s available  
 Flexible scheduling according to student needs  
 Programs for students going into trades  
 Encourage creative teacher methods (professional development, team teaching, etc.)  
 Fully implemented alternative to suspension  
 Comprehensive RSU behavioral programs, guidelines and consequences... positive, flexible  
 Open communication with parents and community

Foreign language K-12  
 Consolidation of services and more specialized instruction within RSU  
 Continuation and expansion of G/T program  
 Drop-out prevention program  
 Certified health teachers K-12  
 Functional lifeskills programs (FLS)  
 Continuation and expansion of UA programs  
 Aligned curriculum across RSU by grade level  
 RSU groups Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8 housed in groups  
 Academic afterschool programs for all levels with transportation  
 Full time school health coordinator  
 Extracurricular activities/clubs available to all students with transportation  
 New initiative – parent partners paired with seasoned parents with new in each grade level group  
 Standardization of exit standards from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to high school ideally aligned statewide

### **Finding Common Ground**

Table groups refined the two (2) lists above and identified the five (5) Guiding Beliefs & Principles and the five (5) Key Programs, Practices & Initiatives that they all agreed on. These were then posted on the wall in categories. Facilitators reviewed the wall information and discovered the following vision and themes for the common future for RSU #4 which they presented to all participants.

## **THEMES FOR OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**

- **Equity in programs, resources and opportunities**
- **Academic & co-curricular & extra-curricular**
- **Shared responsibility among all stakeholders**
- **Future preparedness**
- **Safe, respectful learning communities**
- **Technology**
  - **Integration**
  - **Communication**
  - **Data Management**
- **Facilities – maintenance equity configuration**
- **Communication and relationships are essential**
- **Flexibility in meeting student needs – differentiation**
- **Staff development is essential**
- **Dropout Prevention Alternative Programming**
- **All students provided with common curriculum**

The next step will be to bring together the Planning Team on February 2 to review all this material. The team will produce a strategic plan to guide the work of RSU #4 over the next few years. An executive summary will also be sent to all participants. All material including the Executive Summary and the Strategic Plan will be available on our website.