

**SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**1737 Main Street**  
**South Windsor, CT 06074**

**MEMORANDUM**

September 7, 2011

TO: Members, Board of Education

FROM: Kate M. Carter, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

RE: 2011-14 Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning is a common practice found in many school districts. The actual strategic planning document that districts produce, however, can vary widely. Some districts choose a succinct format highlighting select action steps to be completed in three or fewer years while others develop lengthy documents which include a high level of detail and actions to be taken during a period of five or more years. South Windsor's history of strategic planning began in 1988, although the process was not dubbed "strategic planning" at the time. Some may recall *Excellence 2000* and *Vision 2000*, which documented district-wide planning throughout the 1990's. This was followed by *Beyond 2000* which was ultimately followed by *Mapping the Millennium*, a plan designed to guide the district through 2007. Essentially the concept of strategic planning took a hiatus following *Millennium* and there has not been an official strategic planning document since.

Last year we set out a goal to re-introduce the process and produce an initial strategic planning document that would serve as a foundation on which to build future plans. By design, we wanted the document to be succinct, clear and accessible to multiple audiences. The goal is to summarize the focus of our district-wide work for the next three years. It is not intended to be exhaustive list of all of our tasks. Nor is it designed to drill down to the work of an individual teacher or administrator. Certainly, there are many valuable classroom and building-based initiatives not captured in the strategic planning document. The attached plan's purpose is three-fold:

- Communicate overarching, long-term goals of the district to staff, parents, students, and the community at large
- Clarify priorities for staff and provide clear messages about the direction of our collective work
- Guide budget decisions by identifying student needs related to staffing and materials

South Windsor Public Schools' 2011-2014 Strategic Plan identifies specific goals captured in one of three categories 1) Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment of Learning, 2) Professional Learning and Staff Evaluation and 3) Learning Environment. Specific goals are associated with each category and these goals are expected to be completed by July 2014. A wide variety of stakeholders contributed to the process. The following is an overview of the effort to seek input from a wide variety of stakeholders:

**Board of Education**

A work session was held on October 19, 2010 dedicated to the topic of strategic planning. The session was facilitated by two consultants with expertise in the strategic planning process. At this time the Board directed the Superintendent to launch the process in South Windsor. In November the school board approved strategic planning as one of the superintendent's goals. In the spring, I brought back my findings for Board review and feedback during a work session held on May 24, 2011. In August 2011 a hard copy prototype of the document was sent to the board for final review. Board member feedback was incorporated into the draft that is being presented on Tuesday, September 13, 2011.

## **Administrators**

The topic of strategic planning was a regular discussion at administrator team meetings. All administrators were given opportunities to discuss and provide feedback throughout last year. A final draft was reviewed at the August 2011 administrative team meeting. A few edits were identified at this meeting and are now incorporated into the current draft.

## **Teachers**

Strategic planning became the focus of the work at Superintendent's Faculty Advisory Committee meetings throughout the 2010-2011 school year. This committee represents a cross section of schools, grade levels and content areas.

## **Families, Staff, and Students**

As you know, I conducted focus groups at each of our seven schools. The focus group consisted of parents, certified staff, and non-certified staff. The high school meeting also included student representatives. Each session allowed for parents and staff to share ideas to support the continuous improvement of our school system.

## **Community**

As part of the entry plan, I met with a variety of civic organizations. While these meetings were not designed for the purpose of strategic planning, they certainly provided valuable insights to our planning for the future of South Windsor Public Schools. The groups included:

- South Windsor Community Foundation
- Rotary Club
- Junior Women's Club
- Wood Memorial Library Staff
- South Windsor Police Department
- South Windsor Historical Society
- Human Rights Commission Leadership
- PTO/PAC Presidents
- Senior Citizen Advisory Council
- Parks and Recreation Department

I hope this summary of the steps taken throughout the 2010-2011 school year that led to the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan are helpful. I thank the board for its work that led to this exciting new chapter in our collective efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of South Windsor Public Schools.