



Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

Educational Summit: Preliminary Discussions on Strategic Planning Process



Prepared for School Committee Presentation
September 3, 2008



Defining the High Performance Organization

- Focused on ***effectiveness*** rather than efficiency, with leaders who believe that people are the organization's greatest asset
- Basis is high-performing teams that work ***cross-functionally*** towards clearly articulated vision, mission, and goals

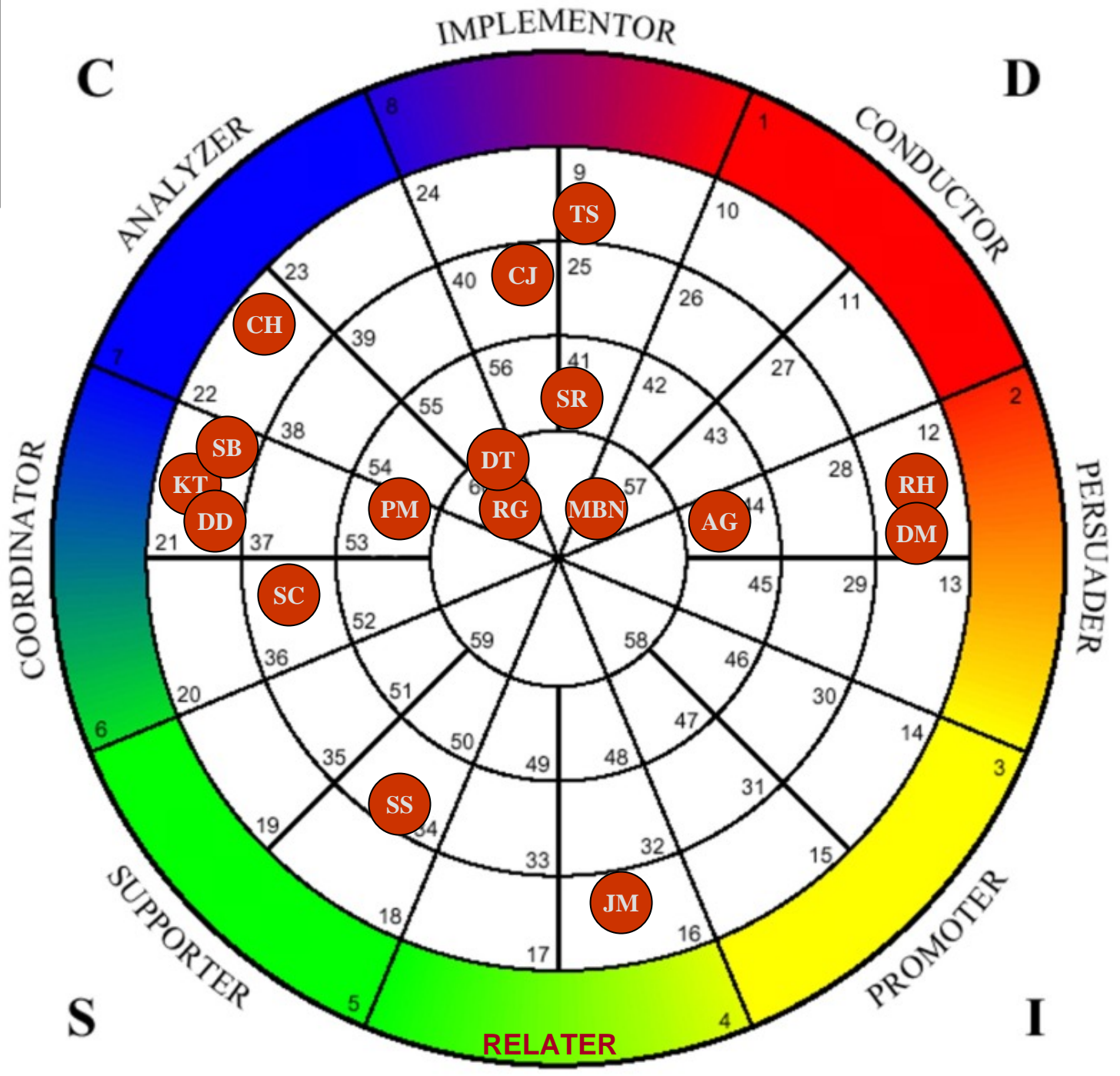
KEY

-  Natural
-  Adapted

**Groton-Dunstable
Regional School District**

Key to Initials

- Mark Branco – MB
- Steve Byrne - SB
- Shelley Marcus Cohen – SC
- Debra Diggins – DD
- Alan Genovese – AG
- Ruthann Goguen - RG
- Russ Hoyt – RH
- Camilla Huston – CH
- Christopher Jones – CJ
- Dina Mancini-DM
- Jeanne Mitchell – JM
- Peter Myerson – PM
- Susan Rubel – SR
- Timothy Sheehan – TS
- Steve Silverman – SS
- Karen Tuomi – KT
- Dan Twomey - DT



High Performance Focal Points





Elements of Strategic Planning

Why Do Strategic Planning?

■ Purpose:

- Alignment among organizational, unit, and individual goals and integration of goals and priorities into day-to-day work

■ Rationale:

- Clear, organization-wide understanding and commitment to priorities as a basis for high performance (getting into leader's brain space)
- Better accountability for organizational, unit, and individual results (with support for appropriate autonomy)



Benefits of Strategic Planning

- Creation of opportunities for new/alternative revenue sources
- Organization-wide focus on key issues
- Enhanced team work and morale
- Increased business/community support and new strategic alliances
- Improved planning skills for administration
- Problems anticipated before they arrive



Potential Pitfalls of Strategic Planning

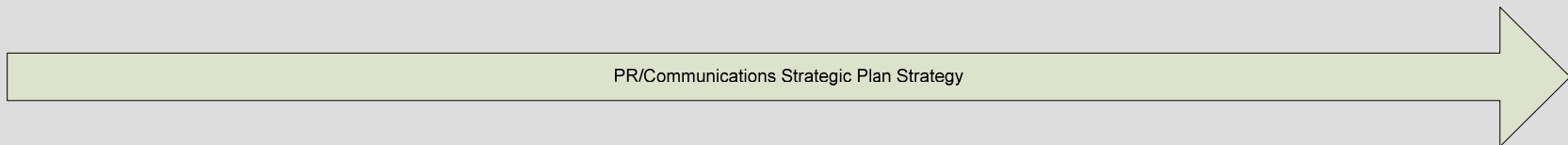
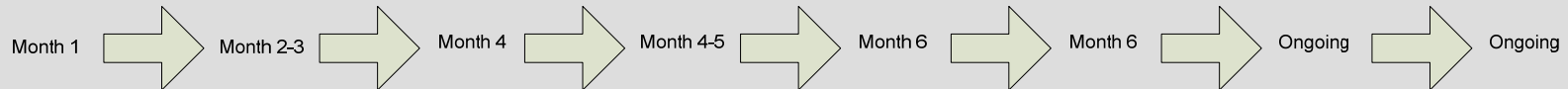
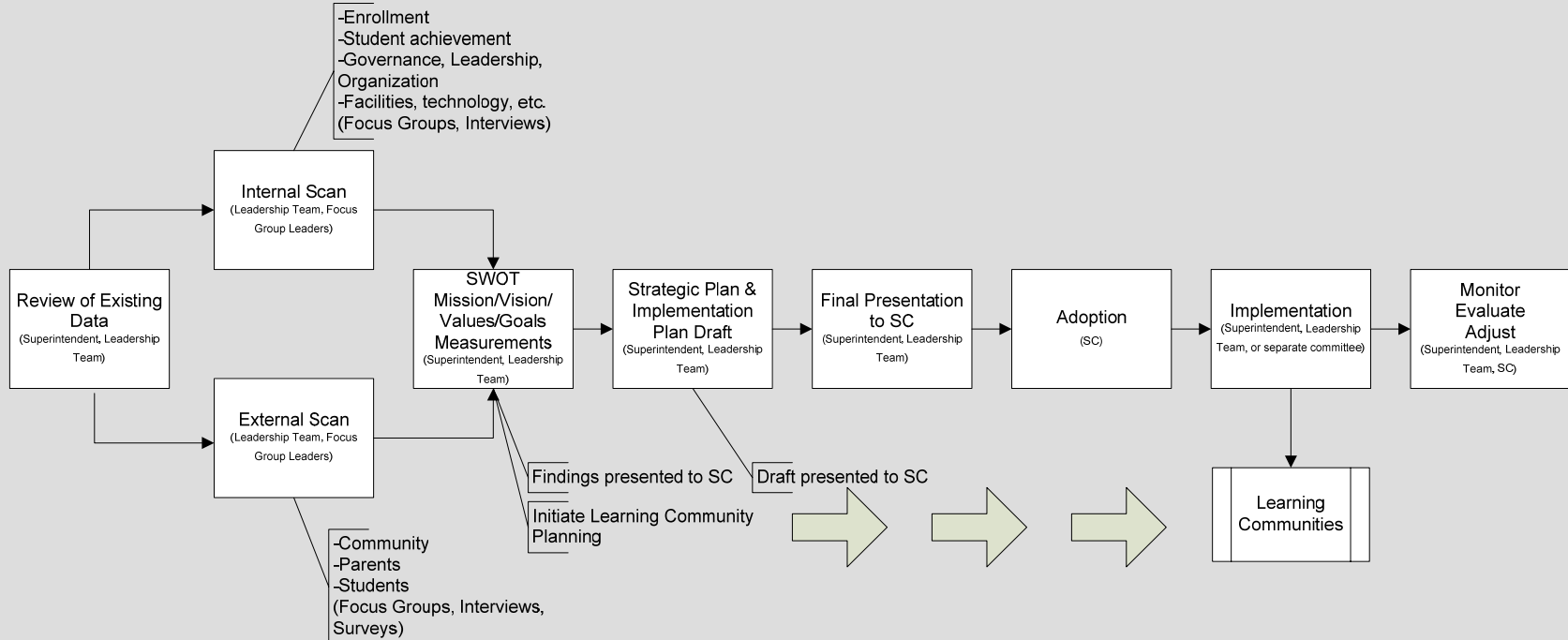
- Failure to adjust to environmental conditions that impact plan
- Counting on Superintendent? alone to lead all aspects of planning
- Taking too long for the process or moving too fast
- Lack of staff or community involvement
- Not being “visionary enough”; fear of going “outside the box”



Strategic Planning Process

Flowchart and Timeline

Groton-Dunstable Strategic Planning Process





Expectations and Assumptions

- A defined approach
- Designates specific responsibilities
- Anticipate broad participation
- Opportunity for relationship building
- Runs parallel with all strategic planning process steps


Review of Existing Data

- Led by Superintendent and leadership team
- Establish initial focus/goal areas
- Defines new data needs (helpful for focus group questions)
- Review existing data
 - Prior strategic plans
 - Enrollment data
 - Studies (EQA and NEASC)
 - Other
- Complete in Month 1

EQA Report (2005-2007)

- Student performance:
 - MCAS Results

- What factors drive student performance?
 - Overall district management
 - Fidelity of implementation
 - Leadership, governance, and communication
 - Curriculum and instruction
 - Assessment and program evaluation
 - Human resource management
 - Access, participation, and student academic support
 - Financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency



EQA Recommendations (2005-2007)

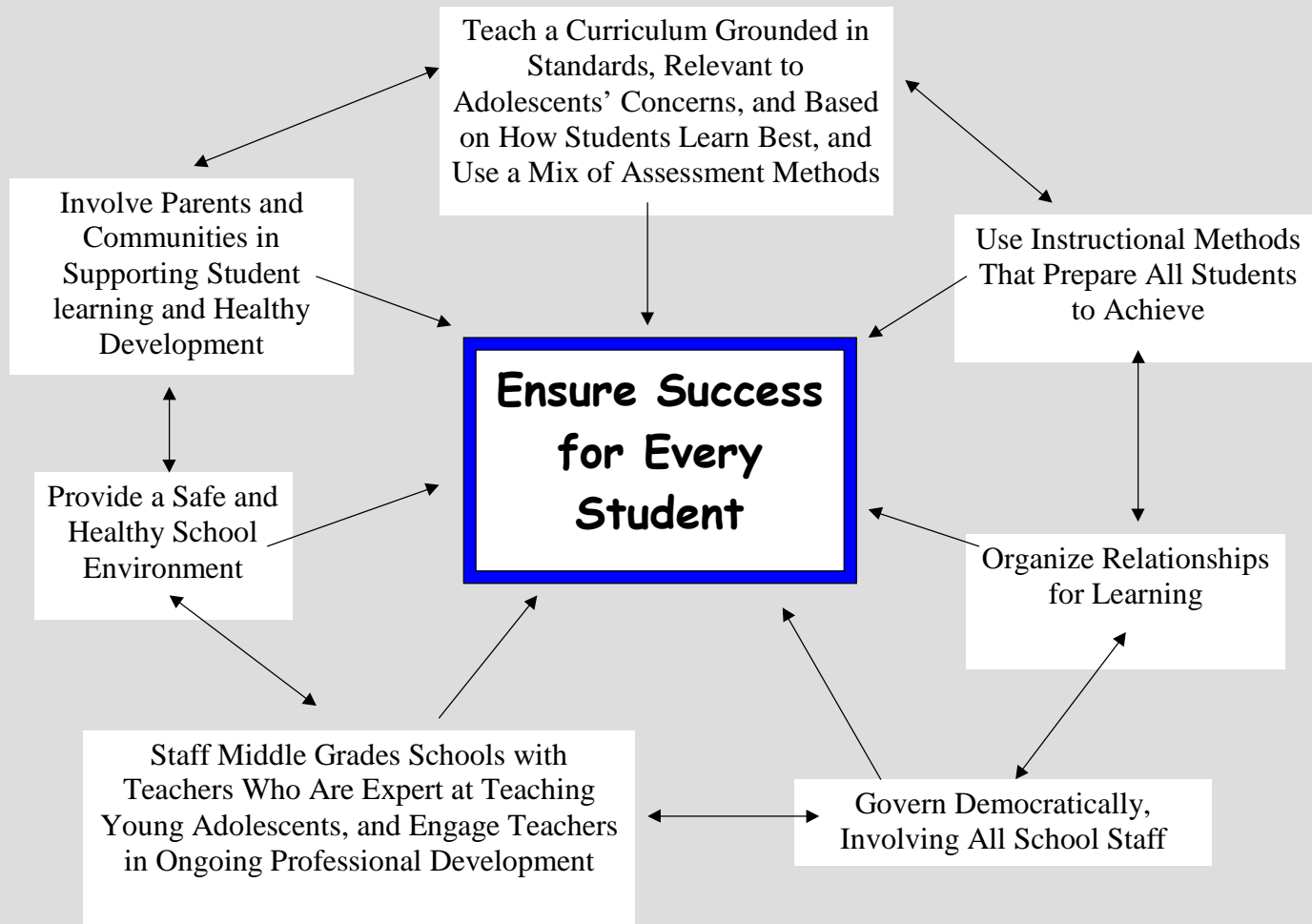
- Reconsider budgetary decisions that may further reduce net school spending
- Provide a viable plan and necessary resources to facilitate integration of technology into instruction
- Develop/Implement system of professional staff supervision and support staff improvement with well designed professional development



NEASC Accreditation Process Standards

1. Mission and expectations for student learning
2. Curriculum
3. Instruction
4. Assessment of student learning
5. Leadership and organization
6. School resources for learning
7. Community resources for learning

Turning Points 2000



Key Focus Areas for G-D Strategic Planning

- Discussion of initial key focus areas (breakout)
- ‘Categorization’ of key focus areas (breakout)
- Format for final plan “categorizations”
 - i.e. distinctions between ‘priorities’, ‘goals’, ‘strategies’, and ‘focus areas’

Internal Scan

- Led by leadership team with focus group leaders, teacher's/aides, and other internal staff as needed

- Information relative to internal focus areas:
 - Enrollment/history and projections
 - Test scores/student achievement (e.g. MCAS)
 - Facilities/technology
 - Curriculum, grants
 - Health care, ancillary
 - Leadership/governance/organizational development

- Focus groups, interviews, organizational data

- Complete during Months 2-3

External Scan

- Led by leadership team with focus group leaders and other resources as needed

- Information relative to external focus areas:
 - Family patterns
 - Demographics
 - Society
 - Ecology
 - Jobs, occupations, work
 - Economics

- Focus groups, interviews, online surveys

- Involves parents, community, students, others

- Complete during Months 2-3

Focus Groups

- Information used for internal/external scans and SWOT analysis
- Homogeneous stakeholder groups that review current internal/external conditions/issues and express points of view that impact planning
 - 8 participants per group is ideal
- Focus Group Leaders can come from Leadership Team or subject matter experts provided the Leaders:
 - Have commitment to objectivity
 - Possess the ability to write an accurate summary in areas of strategic planning focus
 - Are properly trained to perform role
- Complete during Months 2-3



Focus Group Exercise (Breakout)

- General Strategic Planning
- Key Focus Area Planning

Examples of Focus Group Questions

General: What is your vision for the school system over the next 5 years and how would you measure success in 2013?

- Focus Area: What is your vision for _____ (e.g. technology) over the next 5 years
- General: If you could change one thing that would improve the school system but it seems impossible, what would it be?
- Focus Area: If you could change one that that would improve _____ (e.g. technology) but it seems impossible what would it be?



SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat Analysis)

- Led by Superintendent and leadership team using data/output from internal and external scans
- Defines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/priority areas, threats
- Team presents findings of scans and SWOT to school committee
- Complete during Month 4

Drafting the Plan

- Led by superintendent and leadership team
- Plan components include:
 - Mission
 - Vision
 - Values
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - Measurements of Success
- May include scenario planning
- Action planning for implementation
- Complete during Months 4-5



Presentation and Adoption

- Led by Superintendent and leadership team
- For buy-in, engagement, and balance, the Superintendent and leadership team gives the opportunity for the school committee to comment before presentation
- Complete during Month 6



Implementation

- Led by Superintendent and leadership team or separate committee
- Needs attention during strategic planning draft stage to properly integrate implementation planning into the broader process
- Result: Implementation Action Plan

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

- A professional learning community:
 - shifts the focus on teaching to a focus on **learning**
 - Promotes a **collaborative** culture and builds time for collaborative teaching
 - Emphasizes **results**
 - Enables all students to maximize their learning

Professional Learning Communities

- **Collaboration** among educators is required, the school is structured to enable this, and teams develop specific norms to ensure it happens effectively
- Teams set measurable, short term goals for student **learning** connected to the state/district standards (not for implementation of programming)
- **Formative** assessments are used to measure where student achievement is in relation to the goals
- The school has a **systematic** approach that provides students who haven't reached goals with additional time and support within the regular school program in order to ensure that they learn



Monitoring Progress Evaluating, Adjusting



What Is Needed for Success?

Next Steps

- Develop action plan for Leadership Team
- Establish/Define role and responsibilities
- Assess need for consultant
- SC approves process
- Schedule further strategic planning meetings for gathering existing data, internal and external scan

Team Action Plan

Task	Timeline	Assigned To	Deliverables
1. Organizing data (EQA and other data)	by October 15, 2008	Jeanne Mitchell Karen Tuomi Ruthann Goguen	
2. Marketing and Public Relations	Ongoing	Jim Frey Mark Branco	
3. Vision Statement (Draft)	by September 30, 2008	Alan Genovese Lyle Kirtman	
4. Oversee/Coordinate Focus Group Process	start by September 9, 2009 **First AC Meeting** complete by November 1, 2008	Chris Jones	
5. Focus Group Questions	by September 23, 2008	Alan Genovese Lyly Kirtman	
6. Focus Group Training Sessions	by September 23, 2008	Lyle Kirtman	

Focus Group Leaders Responsibilities

Future Management Systems, Inc.



Objectives

- To understand the purpose of focus groups within the context of strategic planning
- To develop strategies for recruiting members, leading groups, and recording outcomes
- To determine timelines for scheduling meetings and submitting results to FMS for inclusion in key findings

What Focus Groups Are:

- (Usually small) group discussions
- Interaction with key customers/stakeholder groups
- Fast research providing qualitative data
- Guided, not structured, discussion
- Usually involve bringing people with similar interests/backgrounds together (homogeneous grouping)
- Good for exploratory avenues, or general attributes about an issue

What Focus Groups Are *Not*:

- Substitutes for surveys
- Means for obtaining specific measurements/data
- Open forums
- Rigid
- All-inclusive (don't address every issue or every research question)
- “Serial interviews”

Desired Outcomes

- Group's input on current issues and thoughts on how to address them
- Group's input on challenges ahead
- Data to inform creation of mission, vision, and strategic goals
- Notes documented as key ideas and submitted to FMS for inclusion in Focus Group Findings report



Target Date for Completion

Final Plan

December/January

Together, a Promise to Excel!

