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A strategic plan for our schools

My View

Val Gilman

The Gloucester School Committee is working to create a five-year strategic plan for the district.

When complete, this plan will provide a long-term vision of our schools and service to guide district policy and spending in support of its goals. It is important that the strategic plan reflects the priorities and interests of the community and that it has the strong backing of teachers and other frontline education professionals.

With this in mind the School Committee will host focus group sessions for both constituencies in November and December. Parent/community participants and faculty/staff participants will brainstorm two important questions:

"What could the school district do that would delight you?"

"What information or advice would you give the strategic planning team as they make decisions about long term priorities and goals?"

Community wide parent & community strategic planning/visioning sessions will be held at all five elementary schools on Wednesday, Nov. 3, at 7 p.m.

The sessions will be facilitated by our elementary school principals with the assistance of school committee members. We are grateful that our city councilors are helping our committee to get the word out to their constituency base in all wards throughout Gloucester. Look for more information in your Ward newsletters and correspondence. Our committee hopes to have broad and active participation to generate visionary ideas for Gloucester Public School District,

Three additional focus groups will be co-facilitated by Superintendent Joe Connelly and me. They will be held in the School Committee Chambers at the Fuller School on the following dates:

Monday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 15 at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m.

In December, faculty and staff strategic planning/visioning sessions will be held. These sessions, also conducted by our principals, will be designed to solicit feedback and dialogue on various educational initiatives, not limited to theme-based schools, student project centered learning, after school programs for staff and students, and "Race to the Top" initiatives.

With little hope in the near term for increased revenue growth in our city, we are anticipating some significant financial challenges in the years ahead.

This makes effective planning and use of resources all the more important. The success and reputation of our school district affects your children, grandchildren, and, ultimately, your property values.

It is important to hear from as many community members and faculty and staff as possible in these GPSD strategic planning sessions.

For those who are unable to attend a focus group session, an anonymous Gloucester Public school district vision survey, to augment these focus group sessions, will be available online at www.gloucesterschools.com after Oct. 27.

The School Committee appreciates your participation and input as we plan for the future strategic direction of the Gloucester Public school district.

Thanks in advance for your continued support of the Gloucester Public School District.

Val Gilman is chairwoman of the Gloucester School Committee.