SWOT Analysis
Barrington School District
Fall 2008

The following summary provides an overview of a SWOT analysis conducted in the Barrington School District in the fall of 2008. Parents and District employees were invited to participate in the analysis. Sixty-nine surveys were completed. Parents completed nine surveys and employees completed 60 surveys.

What is a SWOT Analysis?
A SWOT analysis is a straightforward model for assessing an organization. This business practice provides the opportunity for managers to understand the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This information may then be used for strategic planning purposes.

What are strengths and weaknesses?
The answer to this question might be in the answers to the following: What does the District do well? What unique resources does the District use in conducting its daily business? What do "others" see as the District's strengths? What could the District improve? Where does the District have fewer resources than other districts? What do "others" see as the District's weaknesses? Strengths and weaknesses may be within our control. These questions help to ascertain what we are doing well, where we need to improve, and the type of resources we might need.

What are opportunities and threats?
Opportunities and threats are usually "external" influences outside of our organization/District-sometimes even our control. Opportunities might be captured by the District to achieve a goal or support a program. Threats on the other hand hinder goal attainment. Questions around opportunities and threats include: What opportunities are open/available to our District that could assist the District in achieving its goals? What "trends" could the District take advantage of? What "trends" harm the District? What threats might our District weaknesses create?

Respondents to the survey had the opportunity to respond to the preceding questions, as well as, make any additional comments. All responses were confidential. Sample "SWOT Block" is enclosed at the end of this summary.

Raw data responses follow each SWOT section. "Checkmarks" ($\sqrt{}$) in the raw data indicate more than one response.

STRENGTHS
District strengths were defined as those *organizational pieces* that support strong educational practices in Barrington. These *pieces* may consist of personnel, facilities, equipment, programs, structures (communication, decision-making, etc.), or the organization of schools.

Strengths identified in the data analysis were grouped in the categories of *Community Resources/Perceptions of the District, School Programs/Programming, and School Personnel.* Individual strengths were not summarized in this document, only those receiving more than one response. A list of strengths may be found at the end of this section.

Community Resources/Perceptions of the District
There was a strong perception that the District utilizes and accepts parent volunteers and PTA, that resources are shared among District and community/state organizations (UNH was specifically identified several times), and that community connections exist and are used. There exists a strong community spirit, support, and resources for the District. The District has well maintained facilities and instructional equipment.

School Programs/Programming
School support programs for students were given multiple positive responses. These programs include Title I, SNAPS, Special Education, TAG, Jumpstart to Literacy, Before and After School, Enrichment, Multiage, Unified Arts, Technology, Saturday School, and Preschool. These programs perceived as offering opportunities for students.

Teaching materials and curriculum were noted as providing a fabric for instruction with available collaboration among Unified Arts, Special Education, administration, and guidance personnel/programs. Class size was also noted as conducive to effective instruction.

School Personnel
School personnel received overwhelming acknowledgement for their commitment, knowledge, quality, and care for students. It was perceived that school personnel developed relationships, collaborated, were flexible and welcoming. Administrators were acknowledged for their support and communication with teachers. Professional development opportunities were viewed as based on employee and student needs.

Summary List of Strengths

Community Resources/Perceptions of District
•Outside dental organizations providing screening and education to students
•Resource sharing with public organizations√
•Good school spirit/community support/resources√√√√√√√
•Community connections√
•PTA√
•Welcoming schools√
•Others see cohesive professional community
•District's reputation
•Place for students to go sledding
•All kids able to play sports
•UNH Interns√
•UNH as a resource
•Parent volunteers√√√√√√√√√√
•Acceptance of parent volunteers
•HS Task Force
•Positive School Board
•Facilities/equipment√√√√√

School Programs/Programming
•Support staff and programs
•Title I Reading Program√√
•SNAPS√√
•Special Education Program√√√√√√
•Behavior Coaches
•TAG program√√√
•Jumpstart to Literacy√√√√√
•Preschool/Child Find√
•Kindergarten
•Opportunities for students√
•Support for kids
•Before and after school programs√√
•Enrichment programs√√√
•Saturday School
•Pre-K program
•Multiage Program√√√√
•UA programs
•Special Education reputation
•Unified curriculum
•Push for literacy
•Technology√√
•Test scores improving
•Curriculum√
•Teaching materials√√
•NWEA testing
•Maintaining Art and Music
•Field trips (to a variety of locations)
•Opportunities for collaboration among UA, special education, administration, guidance
•Class size conducive to effective instruction√
•Discipline
•Common planning time

School Personnel
•Staffing/District, committed, knowledgeable, quality, caring of students- teachers/professionals √√√√√√√√
√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√
•Faculty relationships/collaboration/flexible/welcoming/work well together√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√
•Risk takers
•A desire to improve
•Talented staff
•Educating children
•Support for students
•Core teachers accepting special education students
•Excellent students
•Open communication
•Administration supports/communicates with teachers√√√√√√√√√
•Elementary administrators√
•Elementary school communication
•PD opportunities based on needs√√√√√√
•Team professional development
•Tuition reimbursement

WEAKNESSES

District weaknesses were defined as those *organizational pieces* that *distract* support from strong educational practices in Barrington. These *pieces* may consist of personnel, facilities, equipment, programs, structures (communication, decision-making, etc.), or the organization of schools.

Weaknesses identified in the data analysis were grouped in the categories of *Community Resources/Perceptions of District, School Programs/Programming, School Personnel, Student Expectations, Professional Development, Communication, and Long-term Planning/Facilities.* Single weakness responses made up much of the data under *Weaknesses*. Individual weaknesses were not fully summarized, only those receiving more than one response. A list of weaknesses may be found at the end of this section.

Community Resources/Perceptions of District
The only multiple response was in the area of tapping resources that were *outside* of the District. Other noted responses included the need for community/family involvement and informing community members about the programs and operations of the District.

School Programs/Programming
Unified Arts/Extended Learning School resources should be matched to low-socioeconomic students with extended learning opportunities offered to gifted students. Unified Arts was identified as needing more personnel and time. Two areas received multiple responses. Respondents noted the need for accelerated learning programs for the gifted and talented in grades K – 3 and additional time for music and art.
Multiage Program Multiage programming elicited responses concerning grade-span groupings and social/academic viability for students. A multiple response noted that multiage was not for all students.
General Programming Curriculum changes in reading and mathematics, testing, and lack of a full-day/five day-a-week kindergarten were noted as weaknesses. Only the need for more general education support staff received a multiple response.
Special Education Special education caseload received a multiple response. Concerns were noted around staffing, paperwork, and the number of special education students.

School Personnel
Establishing clear expectations, consistent recognition, and a clear process for teacher evaluation were indicated responses in this area. Competitive pay for teachers received multiple responses.

Student Expectations
Student academic preparation (for middle and high school), transition from elementary to middle school, and student dependence on others were noted response areas. In addition, low and consistent expectations for students' behavior were noted as receiving multiple responses.

Professional Development
Respondents identified more coordinated, job embedded, on-going, focused professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals as a need. The lack of follow through on professional development ideas/training and the use of "in-house" experts received multiple responses. Professional development for paraprofessionals or their participation in teacher professional development activities should be reviewed.

Communication
The articulation of curriculum and communication between the elementary and middle school was seen as an area of weakness. More communication, collaborative work, and understanding of curriculum and curriculum related issues were needed. Communication between administration and teachers also received a multiple response.

Long-term Planning/Facilities
Visioning and planning for facility space, especially at the Barrington Elementary School received multiple responses as did not constructing a high school. Visioning or having a common known direction for District work, initiatives, and professional development was part of *visioning*.

Summary List of Weaknesses
Community Resources/Perceptions of District
•Community involvement
•Family involvement
•Parents do not know about MS are scared of MS
•Parents need to be held accountable
•Mindset that school should teach values instead of parents
•Unsupportive community
•Others see district as wasteful with budget
•Tap outside resources√
•Focus on community enrichment projects
•Operate schools like a business-cap spending-in special education
•Funding raising-quality of products should improve-use local businesses

School Programs/Programming
Unified Arts/Extended Learning
•After school support of low socio-economic students
•Faculty matching resources to low socio-economic families
•After school tutoring
•Need accelerated learning programs especially for gifted and K-3√
•Perception that TAG students do not have their needs met
•Teachers not able to extend their program for advanced students
•Budget for UA
•More music and art time√
•Need more teachers 2 art, 2 music,
•Classroom libraries
•Little or no funding for science
Multiage Program
•Multiage program—concerned socially for 6th graders and academically for 8th graders-group 5/6 and 7/8-trend
•Multiage program not advantageous for advanced students for 3 years
•Multiage program not for all students√
•5th grade team outsiders
•Little team cohesiveness
•Too many students on a team
General Programming
•Lunch monitoring at BES
•Logistics of students lining up/quieting down
•Foreign language offering at BES
•BES reading program
•Improving reading and writing skills-elementary day should be longer
•Elimination of early intervention reading program
•Everyday math program
•More focus on math and science
•Need to memorize math facts at a young age

School Programs/Programming Continued
•Curriculum improvement
•Teaching to trends
•7 point grading system
•Testing
•Test scores lower than should be
•No full-day-5 day kindergarten program
•5 day/week kindergarten program
•Need more general support staff√
•Children do not participate in enough decisions
•Class size
•Limited technology
•More resources for keyboarding and writing research papers
•Eliminate team 'big trips'
•Strict scheduling√
•Constraint of current school day
•More time for lunch and recess
Special Education
•More special education students
•Teacher to student ratio special education
•IEP communication with parents
•Time spent on special education paperwork
•Class size special education/caseload√
•Need to group students instead of 1:1
•Placement of students in support programs Title I/Special Education
•Para's for special education students
•Lack of wrap around approach with external school resources

School Personnel
•Increase pay for teachers√√
•Clear practice for teacher assessment (parent/student)
•Expectations of staff can be unclear
•Strict adherence to personnel policies
•Para turnover
•Recognition of work is not being done consistently
•Hire from within

Student Expectations
•Students unprepared for BMS
•Students not prepared for HS
•Students dependence on others
•Transition from elementary to middle school
•Low/consistent expectations of students behaviorally-but improving√√

Professional Development
•Stronger/more professional development√√
•Get excited about ideas then nothing happens/no follow up training√√√√
•Use federal funds for PD
•No PLC's (Professional Learning Communities)
•District staff doing more together
•Administrators do not use expertise on staffs√√√
•Need more cohesiveness among staff
•PD for para's√
•Lack of training for para's
•Need more special education training
•Para's not paid allowing them to attend forums and meetings
•PD on GLE's√
•PD Multiple Intelligences
•Need more differentiated instruction/teaching
•Better use of data tools-Performance Pathways
•Faculty education on issues of low socio-economic children

Communication
•Communication between administration teachers√
•Communication between school and parents and within school itself
•Articulated curriculum/communication between MS and ES√√√√√√√√√√
•Lack of respect among colleagues-subtle
•Unilateral decision-making
•Defensive postures
•Rule-based administration
•Too top heavy

Long-term Planning/Facilities
•Need focus
•Plan for the future
•Common known vision
•More facility space√√√√
•Better planning for space changes (smaller/larger classes) at BES√
•Need art room
•No HS√√√
•No HS available
•Be more "green"
•Facility maintenance/cleanliness

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for the District were defined as those *outside resources* that support the attainment of District goals and support the educational practices/operations of the District. These *pieces* may consist of people, facilities, equipment, programs, legislation, and organizations.

Opportunities identified in the data analysis were grouped in the categories of *Community Resources/Perceptions of District, School Programs/Programming, School Personnel, Professional Development, and Long-term Planning/Facilities.* Individual opportunities were not fully summarized, only those receiving more than one response. A list of opportunities may be found at the end of this section. Opportunities and threats are usually "external" influences outside of our organization/District-sometimes even our control. Opportunities might be captured by the District to achieve a goal or support a program. Threats on the other hand hinder goal attainment.

Community Resources/Perceptions of District
Using the community as a resource to support the District was noted as an opportunity for the District. These resources included parent volunteers, community presenters, and capitalizing on the personnel, programs, and services of UNH.

School Programs/Programming
Although no multiple responses were made in this category, specialized programs/services, curriculum work, and technology were noted as opportunities. The repeal of *No Child Left Behind* was also noted.

Professional Development
Professional development was viewed as creating strong potential for the District. Opportunities for federal, state, private grant funding for teacher training in reading and mathematics, and course reimbursement were noted as sources of *opportunity support* for the District.

School Personnel
School personnel were acknowledged as being flexible, collaborating, and developing relationships that support opportunities for instruction and learning in the District.

Long-term Planning/Facilities
Green trends in construction received a multiple response under facilities. This is the design/use of equipment, construction, and strategies for promoting cost savings and student education.

Community Resources/Perceptions of District
•Speaker from DCYF to speak to faculty about reporting child abuse and neglect
•Resources: HUB, Community Partners, Babies Best Beginnings, Head Start, Avis Goodwin Community Health, Southeastern NH Services, Girls Inc., Big Buddy Program, Milton Heresy School, A Safe Place, SASS, Child Advocacy Center, NH Healthy Kids Insurance
•Community presenters√√√
•Community resources√
•Parent volunteers√√√√
•Community mentor program for students
•Silent community members
•Create communication vehicle to community
•Acquire land for future planned buildings-library
•Offer surrounding towns access to our programs/facilities/services
•Family events scouts, craft nights, Harley Davidson Bike Days

Community Resources/Perceptions of District Continued
- Use local/New England markets for purchasing
- Business donations
- Clubs for non-athletic students
- Education community on what budget is spent on
- Elect candidates who support public education√
- UNH environmental sustainability ideas
- Proximity to UNH/Classes/State initiatives/Organizations√√√√√
- UNH beyond interns√
- Mentors-college students√

School Programs/Programming
- TAG parents group
- TAG program needs to continue to grow
- BOOK IT Program
- Effective Parenting Class
- TOCA Teachers' Observations of Childhood Abilities Reading & mental health assessment
- Walk NH Program
- Full day kindergarten
- Current teaching practices
- Services for 'B' students to be 'A' students
- Alignment of curriculum/data for instruction
- State and federal data analysis
- Aligning curriculum to GLE's
- Peer to peer group
- Follow-up to Rachel's Challenge-encourage students to work together
- Field trips
- Own mini bus for field trips
- Technology
- Technology grants
- Focus on *Follow the Child*
- Repeal NCLB√

School Personnel
- Faculty relationships/collaboration/Flexible√√
- Opportunities to be individuals-express ideas
- Maintain strong leadership
- Recognize each others' strengths

Professional Development
- Federal funds for teacher training in reading and for tutoring/SINI/DINI√
- Grants/redistribution funds for PD√√√
- Team professional development
- Differentiated teaching training
- Grants√√√√√
- Staff development√√√
- On-line learning for students and staff√
- Exploring learning opportunities
- PD√√
- Course reimbursement√
- Use staff expertise

Long-term Planning/Facilities
•Facilities/equipment/resources
•Green trends/recycling√
•Commercial shredder/services
•Space planning
•Progressive in our out-look of high school
•Low interest rates for HS construction

EXTERNAL THREATS

External threats for the District were defined as those *outside influences* that *distract* the District from attaining its goals. These *pieces* may consist of people, facilities, equipment, programs, legislation, and organizations.

External threats identified in the data analysis were grouped in the categories of *Community Resources/Perceptions of District, School Programs/Programming, School Personnel, Budget, and Long-term Planning/Facilities.* Individual threats were not fully summarized, only those receiving more than one response. A list of external threats may be found at the end of this section.

Opportunities and threats are usually "external" influences outside of our organization/District-sometimes even our control. Opportunities might be captured by the District to achieve a goal or support a program. Threats on the other hand hinder goal attainment.

Community Resources/Perceptions of District

Barrington's increasing population, family stresses/competing lifestyles, parental dictation of policy, and the under valuing of education were perceived as threats to the District. Misinformation/non-information concerning District programs and the need for community based social programs were also noted in this category as threats.

School Programs/Programming

The influence of *No Child Left Behind* and the lack of full funding for federal educational mandates and the resulting budget impact and student testing were defined threats that received multiple responses.

Budget

Budget development under difficult economic times at the local, state, and national level were perceived as threats. Resulting budget impacts (elimination of key programs and people) and possible budget cap were also noted as multiple responses.

Long-term Planning/Facilities

Clearly there is a need to assess the needs for programming space within the District. If possible, consideration should be given to reducing possible educational transitions within the District.

Community Resources/Perceptions of District
•When tragedy strikes a family—whom to call for support
•Need to involve new families
•Parental oversight of children-culture of children first
•Competing family life styles with support for academics/volunteering√
•Family stressors
•Non-traditional families
•Family stress levels/life styles√√√√
•Family responsibilities of staff
•Parent groups "out to get" teachers and/or teams
•Parents dictating policy (ipods) √√√
•Rumors unsubstantiated regarding make-up of teams
•Gossip-Barrington rumor mill
•Under valuing education√√
•Negative attitudes about education√√√
•Town gossip
•Community unsettled with multiage
•Free clothing, haircuts during year
•Too many people moving to Barrington-not enough staff-space-higher taxes

Community Resources/Perceptions of District Continued
•Town population√√
•Speaker to address Internet bullying/unsafe student contacts
•Denial of health care needs

School Programs/Programming
•Dover students better prepared than ours when they go to Dover HS
•Group children based on their ability level
•Increasing special education population√
•Time stolen due to NCLB√√√√√√√
•Too much time focused on test scores/teaching to test√√√√
•Marketed NCLB materials-reading
•Republican administration
•Federal mandates without funding√√√√

School Personnel
•Teacher retention-competitive salaries
•Staff turnover

Budget
•Budgets that eliminate key programs/people√
•Reduction in arts funding
•Budget cap√
•Voters without children in school
•Uninformed voters
•Tax caps/tax payer associations
•Economic position of town/nation√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√ √ √√√√√√
•Global changes
•Ensure business growth
•Definition of adequate education
•Funding for education

Long-term Planning/Facilities
•Building a HS when we can't afford it
•Space needs√√√
•Evaluate space issues/usage in the district-try to limit student transitions-look at BMS for space use

CONCLUSIONS

Given the responses of the SWOT survey, strategic planning should be conducted around the following five areas:

Community Resources/Perceptions of District
SWOT respondents perceived Barrington as having strong community spirit providing community support, and resources for the District as evidenced by the involvement of parent volunteers. This support and parent volunteer base needs to be identified and may be a starting point to foster the opportunity for strengthening the parent volunteer program, family involvement/communication, and to develop a listing of possible community presenters. By strengthening parental/family involvement negative attitudes/perceptions about education, budgeting, and devaluing education would be lessened. The key is to defining strategies for involving/informing community members and a support system for implementing/maintaining those strategies.

School Programs/Programming
The strength of the Barrington School District is in its specialized programs (Title I, TAG, Preschool/Child Find, Before/After School, Enrichment, Multiage, and Jumpstart to Literacy). The District should review these programs, including Unified Arts and full-day kindergarten, in an effort to *grow* these programs (improve, expand, inform) using federal, state, and grant funding sources. Content area instruction should be clearly defined/refined on an on-going basis for employees and community members. Strengthening the delivery (what and how) and understanding (why) of instruction for employees and community members would help to address the need and the rationale for specialized programming and funding.

School Personnel
District personnel were perceived as committed, knowledgeable, and flexible individuals who collaborate to provide a quality educational program to students. Lines of communication among teachers and with administrators are well established. Performance expectations, compensation, and recognition need to be set for District employees that maintain and attract quality educators. Lines of communication/decision-making at/among all levels of the organization need to be accurate, consistent, well established, and recognized. Efforts in these areas would help to maintain and foster employee performance and satisfaction. Students and parents need to be aware and acknowledge academic and behavioral expectations.

Professional Development
District employees need to access consistent, on-going, job-embedded, and meaningful professional development. Research should be undertaken to seek available federal, state, and private professional development funding sources. Strategies for professional development delivery should be explored, including in-house experts and Professional Learning Communities. Existing professional development strategies need to be acknowledged and known.

Long-term Planning/Facilities
The District should create, promote, and enact a known vision with focused support on professional development, instruction, learning, programs, and facility development/usage. Such a vision and action would provide clarity for members of the District and the community. This would help to sustain and promote educational efforts and initiatives in the District.