**SWOT Activity**

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| Please list below the **STRENGTHS** you noted in the data from the environmental scan.  *(Areas that we do well, internal advantages for our organization)*   * Committed community of parents, citizens who value education * Talented, dedicated teachers and staff who believe in student success * Generally supportive and committed families. (ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY) * A tradition of high expectations and pride in our students’ accomplishments. * Faculty and staff are, for the most part, among the best in the profession at least in Rhode Island. | Please list below the **WEAKNESSES** you note in the data from the environmental scan.  *(Areas to be improved)*   * Too much emphasis on college-bound tracks to top-tier colleges - should diversify educational and professional options for students who can succeed in different ways after high school * I feel that only about 50% of our administrative leadership is able to or is interested in looking at/working towards/being open to true “thinking outside the box”. This may be a function of limited (wo)manpower, but that should be brought forth as a problem to be worked on, rather than let it deter innovation. * As a community, we are split - there are those that would give anything to support excellence in our schools (see “strengths”) and those who feel the school community is full of entitled, rich, younger folk who don’t understand the burden of those living on a “fixed income”. There is some truth to this, but there are many younger families making great sacrifices to be in Barrington in order to provide their children with the education offered here, and there are many older residents with grand homes, driving around in fancy cars, and complaining about the tax burden. Nonetheless, the perceived split is unhealthy. (ALSO A THREAT) * Union relations. For whatever reason (I believe it has much to do with communication between NEAB leadership and our administration) there seems to be an “us” and “them” feel to relations with our teachers’ union as a whole. I don’t have this feeling when considering or dealing with individual educators, but I believe NEAB leadership takes an adversarial stance when dealing with district leadership. (ALSO A THREAT) * Many of our district’s weaknesses result from a lack of clear, timely, appropriate, consistent, communication from the District. This weakness, I believe, also represents our greatest opportunity. SO MANY of our struggles could be “fixed” or avoided with better communication! (ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY) |
| Please list below the **OPPORTUNITIES** you noted in the data from the environmental scan.  *(External advantages that contribute to our organization and build up our strengths)*   * Collaboration with state colleges should be expanded for college credits or other types of training that can be offered while students are still in high school * Consideration of shifting the elementary-middle school clusters to K-6 and then middle school 7-8 to reflect current thinking about developmental stages and optimal use of our facilities * My sense is that “we” (Barrington? Rhode Island? The US?) are beginning to accept that we need to look at different ways of educating students, including some new ideas about what the final product (a graduate) looks like. I hope we in Barrington can open ourselves to at least some of these ideas/this thinking, rather than consider it a threat. * Continue to leverage the generally strong community support for our schools, but change the perception from one of the schools always “taking” to a sense of more connectedness, a more intertwined and symbiotic relationship. | Please list below the **THREATS** you noted in the data from the environmental scan  *(Potential problems/ risks for our organization caused by external factors)*   * External costs in health care, administrative costs, duplication of costs across schools, and collective bargaining constraints are always a challenge * The deep pockets of the community may be ‘hitting the wall’ sooner rather than later - some proactive work to offset expenses in areas where savings can be effected would contribute to continued good will on the part of the school-town relationship * • Union relations (see above). • Financial constraints. If we don’t look for different ways to do things, we will sink. Our existing district leadership cannot continue to support the schools’ educational efforts as well as manage operations in an integrated fashion. (SEE OPPORTUNITY #1 ABOVE) We have to stop putting out fires and start leading. I don’t see that this is possible without additional/different resources, hence my reference to financial constraints. • RIDE. My novice look at RIDE’s efforts and focus leads me to believe that the State is focused on “fixing” problem areas/districts in RI. Though we certainly have our issues, I do not believe that Barrington appears on RIDE’s radar when formulating new mandates and requirements. My sense is that we can sometimes be forced to adjust the way we do things in order to fit into “solutions” that have been promulgated to address problems we don’t have. This sounds elitist - I don’t mean it to. I do see the one-size-fits-all approach as a threat. |