



# New Jersey School Boards Association

## MEMORANDUM

---

**To:** Allamuchy Board of Education

---

**From:** Kathy Helewa, Field Service Representative

---

**Date:** June 15, 2021

---

**Re:** SY 2021-22 Board Retreat and Goal Setting Workshop

---

On Saturday, June 5, 2021, I was pleased to return to Rutherford Hall for the Allamuchy BOE's Board Retreat. The retreat took place fully in-person, during a public meeting of the Allamuchy Board of Education. The meeting was open to the public and properly advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. In attendance during the session were seven members of the ABOE, and recently appointed Superintendent Dr. Melissa Sabol. Our board retreat agenda comprised the Transition Workshop between the Board and Dr. Sabol, which focused on building an optimal Board/Superintendent relationship and establishing communication norms; and the annual Goal Setting Workshop.

We began our time together by discussing The Allamuchy Learner, which is a manifesto unique to the Allamuchy School District. All those around the dais shared their thoughts on the tenets of the Allamuchy Learner which resonate most strongly with them, and gave examples of how the tenet(s) inform their work as Board members, and, in the case of Dr. Sabol, as Superintendent. Clearly the philosophy outlined in the Allamuchy Learner is important to all. Thus, it is vital that the Board be confident that The Allamuchy Learner is a living document which is made manifest in the student experience provided by District. Dr. Sabol agreed, and as Superintendent will continue to share with the Board examples and evidence of such throughout the year.

Together the Board and Superintendent went through the Allamuchy BOE/Superintendent Communication Norms document. Consensus was reached on all of the items enumerated and the Board and Dr. Sabol agreed to these norms going forward.

Agreement upon the annual District Goals is a collaborative exercise between the Board and the Superintendent. District Goals are the basis for the Superintendent's annual evaluation, as the implementation of District Goals is the purview of the Superintendent rather than the Board. The Superintendent shall update the Board regarding her progress at regular intervals throughout the year in a mutually-agreed upon reporting method.

Under Dr. Sabol's leadership, the Allamuchy BOE recently formally approved its five-year Strategic Plan, which has four goal areas: Curriculum, Safety & Security, Communication, and Facilities & Technology. The Board understands that during its lifespan the Strategic Plan shall be the basis of District Goals.

As such, all those around the dais agreed that the Goal Statements for each of the Strategic Plan goals shall be the formal District Goals for SY 2020-21. The Superintendent proposed that she will focus her action plans on Activities she selected from most of the Objectives delineated in the Plan. Given the ambitious nature of having such a comprehensive amount of activities, the Board asked Dr. Sabol if her action plans are achievable during the upcoming school year. Dr. Sabol affirmatively believes so; some of the activities are in fact already in progress. With that assurance, the Board was happy to agree to her proposal.

We moved to discussion of Board Goals. Board of Education Goals, if set, are the purview of the Board rather than the Superintendent. There is no requirement that BOEs set Board Goals, though they are

deemed a best practice in terms of accountability and improvement of good governance. The Board agreed that this year, they would strive to achieve two Board Goals.

Thus, after robust discussion among all those present, all agreed upon the following goals:

### **Allamuchy Board of Education District Goals for SY 2021-22**

1. Optimize the curriculum to promote The Allamuchy Learner.<sup>1</sup>
2. Foster a physically and emotionally safe and secure learning community where students can grow as learners and citizens while developing a sense of ownership within the community.<sup>2</sup>
3. Articulate District communications to all community stakeholders, establishing ATSD as the “hub”.<sup>3</sup>
4. Enhance and maintain facilities, technologies, and classrooms to facilitate the growing needs of the school population and community.<sup>4</sup>

### **Allamuchy Board of Education Board Goals for SY 2021-22**

1. Complete the Board Self Evaluation by August 1, 2021 for discussion at the September 2021 ABOE meeting.
2. Work towards achieving Board Certification.

### **Next Steps**

District Goals should be formally approved as an agenda item at the next Board meeting, and should be posted on the District website after approval. Dates for periodic updates on progress on these goals should be established. The final step will be evaluating the Superintendent (in April/May 2022) on her achievement of the District Goals.

Board Goals likewise should be formally approved as an agenda item at the next ABOE meeting and should be posted on the District website. Instructions for accessing and completing the Board Self Evaluation (BSE) were emailed, by me, to all members of the Board on June 11. Dr. Sabol will also participate in the BSE.<sup>5</sup>

The Board President and Superintendent will work with me to schedule professional development sessions to help the Board achieve Certification, which is a multi-year process. Additionally, the Board will work to

---

<sup>1</sup> The action plan for this goal will comprise Activities 1.1.6, 1.2.3, 1.2.7, and 1.2.9 of the Allamuchy School District Strategic Plan 2021-25, Goal Strand: Curriculum.

<sup>2</sup> The action plan for this goal will comprise Activities 2.1.9, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, and 2.4.4 of the Allamuchy School District Strategic Plan 2021-25, Goal Strand: Safety and Security.

<sup>3</sup> The action plan for this goal will be Activity 3.1.3 of the Allamuchy School District Strategic Plan 2021-25, Goal Strand: Communication.

<sup>4</sup> The action plan for this goal will comprise Activities 4.1.6, 4.2.3, 4.3.3, and 4.5.5 of the Allamuchy School District Strategic Plan 2021-25, Goal Strand: Facilities and Technology.

<sup>5</sup> Regretfully, current School Business Administrator Jim Schlessinger will be leaving the District effective 06.30.21. Thus he will not be participating in the BSE.

complete the other criteria for certification, as found on the NJSBA website, at <https://www.njsba.org/training/board-member-academy/board-certification/bc/><sup>6</sup>

\*\*\*

Thank you again for inviting me to facilitate your Board Retreat. I truly appreciated the opportunity to meet with you—*in person!!*—in the unique and beautiful facility that is Rutherford Hall to discuss the unique and beautiful statement of belief that is The Allamuchy Learner. I am pleased to know that the Board is committed to professional development and advancing its teamwork and governance practices. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you, and thus serve the students of Allamuchy.

Kathy Helewa

---

**<sup>6</sup> NJSBA Board Certification requirements [as of 06.14.21]:**

- Earn 16 credits of group training within a four-year period. \*
- Participate in at least one full-day retreat (or an equivalent of board workshops)
- Complete an NJSBA Policy Wellness Check (policy audit) to ensure that the board’s policy manual is current
- Complete an analysis of the district’s negotiated teachers contract by NJSBA’s Legal and Labor Relations staff
- Demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement through completion of the annual board self-evaluation
- Comply with current mandatory training requirements for each board member
- Satisfy the governance portion of the New Jersey Department of Education monitoring process (If the board has not received a satisfactory rating from the NJDOE and the state has intervened in board operations, the board may demonstrate effective governance by pursuing the alternate route of annually adopting and implementing a “Code of Governance” developed with NJSBA staff.)

*\*If credits are not earned within four years, those from the first year will be dropped and credits from year five will be added. To earn credits, attendance at training must include seven members of a nine-member board; five members of a seven-member board, or four members of a five-member board. The superintendent must also participate in training.*

*Credits will be maintained as long as the composition of the board remains the same or if the board experiences less than a one-third turnover in membership.*