

Strategic Planning
Agenda and Activities
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Sherman Multicultural Arts School

5110 West Locust Street
Milwaukee, WI 5321-0-1626
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Principal: Dr. Anita Sparks

Goals

- ***Gather*** stakeholder perceptions of the current status of Sherman School
- ***Clarify*** the “Neighborhood School” concept in regards to Sherman School
- ***Establish*** a Partnering Committee whose Mission is to revitalize community commitment to our community’s School

Sense of Urgency

- Do you believe that Urban Public Schools are in Crisis here in Milwaukee?
- The Law of Unintended Consequences
- We are here to help one school, our Community's School, cope with that Crises!



Mission Statement

Community Residents
Dedicated
to
Community Kids
through
the
Community's School

Attributes

- A Successful Neighborhood Provides
 - Quality Education
 - Youth Development
 - Family and Community Engagement
 - Community Development



Principles

- Feasibility of a Coalition Formed to:
 - Foster Strong Partnerships
 - Share Accountability for Results
 - Set High Expectations
 - Build on Community Strengths
 - Embrace Diversity
 - Remain Flexible



Issues: Community School

- This is a school located in our Community
 - Forming a “Community School” requires:
 - Identifying
 - Student social and academic needs
 - Family and community resources
 - Existing Gaps
 - Formulating
 - Collaborative infrastructures
 - Role of Advisory Committee



Process



- Focus Group
 - One and ½ Hour Time Limit
 - Each group consisted of 5-10 Individuals
 - The purpose of this process is to create a “free flow” of ideas focused on Sherman Community School
 - Each group had a Facilitator with recording being done through newsprint displays

Research Questions



- How do we bridge the gap between the limited resources possessed by the school and the unlimited demands students and needy families place upon it?
- What is “your” perception of Sherman School?
- How does the School mirror the Community?
- How can collaboration between Community Businesses and Residents enhance children’s lives at Sherman School?

Dates and Groups



- In order to answer these questions a series of focus group meetings were held at Sherman School with specific stakeholder groups.
 - August 24th three groups of residents representing both themselves and groups they belonged to gathered.
 - September 27th students met to contribute their views.
 - October 4th school staff met and
 - 24th a parents group met.
- The focus groups provided a venue for open brainstorming
- A voting process prioritized findings into action items.

Findings



- All groups agreed that the school needed help.
 - Students and their families are dealing with economic and nutritional conditions that have been deteriorating at an alarming rate.
 - The school is a mirror for understanding how Sherman Park has been affected by current systemic negative economic conditions.

Findings cont'd



- All groups contributed to enumerating a mixed perception of the School.
 - The School had been negatively viewed in the past.
 - But the present staff and principal are regarded in a positive light.
- This perception provides a sound platform for improvement.

Findings cont'd



- Student well-being is negatively challenged.
 - School students are children from the immediate community.
 - They walk to school.
 - They come to school in many cases needing food and clothing.
 - The School is providing, in some cases, three meals a day.
- It is dealing with social issues that diminish the ability of students to achieve their full academic potential.

Findings cont'd



- Reduced curriculum enrichment activities have negatively affected student learning.
- As the school district has responded to reduced funding and population attrition, programming at Sherman School suffered.

In general, Sherman School needs all the help it can get.



Recommendations



- Obtain financial support and/or grant funding for employment of a full time Community Organizer.
- The duties of this individual would be to coordinate on-going partnerships with:
 - Community volunteers
 - Local non-profit organizations
 - Church/congregational communities
 - Interested businesses

Recommend cont'd



- Raise funds to provide more “specials” (music, art, gym, dance, field trips, etc.) for our children.
- Expand and support mentoring and tutoring programs in the school.

Recommend cont'd



- Organize venues for the donation of food, clothing and associated school supplies.
- The students and their families should see Sherman School as a catalyzing agent in the community focused with its community partners on bettering their lives in myriad ways.

Summary



- The foundation of a unique collaboration between Sherman School and its surrounding community has been established.
- We all are challenged to follow through.
- The Sherman Park Community Association is there to help.
- Thanksgiving Dinner: \$30 donation = 1 family meal!

To what extent can we count on you?

Another Model

Adapted from
National Center
For Community Schools
Children's Aid Society
Of New York

Sherman Multicultural Arts School

