

# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Answers by the Board of Education and a Community Focus Group to the Question:

*What topics, questions, issues need to be addressed by the community and the Board of Education to be able to make the best decisions about the future delivery of instruction to the students of the Owen D. Young school district?*

Owen D. Young Central School District  
Van Hornesville, New York

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Prepared with the help of  
The SES Study Team, LLC  
[WWW.SES-StudyTeam.org](http://WWW.SES-StudyTeam.org)

# Planning for the Future

On January 3, 2013, the Owen D. Young Board of Education and Superintendent worked together to answer, preliminarily, the following question:

***What topics, questions, issues need to be addressed by the community and the Board of Education to be able to make the best decisions about the future delivery of instruction to the students of the Owen D. Young school district?***

The purpose of the effort was to create a preliminary written tool that the Board and the Superintendent can use collaboratively to continue their work in developing a short range and long-range plan for the district. The tool also is valuable in engaging public discussion and staff discussion about the short range and long range future efforts of the school district.

Reported on the following page are the collective thoughts of the Board of Education and Superintendent concerning the planning question. All of the ‘answers’ to the question are important. The rank ordering is a preliminary scan to suggest which of the items might be given collaborative attention first, benchmarked to the perceptions as of January 2013.

Planning for a people-service organization is not a static effort. The ‘life’ of a school district serving the young people and the community is dynamic and can be influenced by variables that the district and the community have no direct control over. Visiting at least annually the question above by the Board of Education and the superintendent can help to benchmark the vision and the planned future work of the district as a whole.

***What topics, questions, issues need to be addressed by the community and the Board of Education to be able to make the best decisions about the future delivery of instruction to the students of the Owen D. Young school district?***

<b>Rank Order as of January 2013:</b>	<b>Preliminary Answers to the Question by the Board of Education and the Superintendent:</b>
<b>CATEGORY: The Education Program</b>	
1	How do we achieve the quality of education the community desires for our children?
2	How do we have the teachers and parents partner better to make academic/service decisions about each child together?
5	How do we ensure that there is equity of opportunity for <b>all</b> pupils K-12?
6	How do we ensure the safety of our pupils is ongoing?
6	Are there better ways to deliver instruction to our pupils that we do not practice now? Example: 'looping' allowing teachers to serve the same set of pupils for more than one year; teaming of subject area teachers to serve the same set of pupils together.
7	Are we effectively using the resources we have now? How do we know and measure it?
8	How can we provide more opportunities (life experiences) for the pupils?
9	Should the school day and/or school year be lengthened to give more instructional time for students?
9	How do we close the gap in necessary resources spent for special needs pupils with those spent on non-special needs pupils?
9	Start vocational programs for pupils earlier than we do now in grade 11.
11	What would be the opportunities and challenges if ODY participated in a reorganization with another school district(s)?
12	How do we start and then organize an ongoing volunteer outreach program?
<b>CATEGORY: Personnel</b>	
4	Achieve the standard that each teacher of grades 7-12 has a degree in the subject he/she teaches; and that each teacher of grades K-6 have a major or minor in reading and/or math.
9	How do we better communicate with those teachers whose performance and achievement of students assigned to them need to improve?
<b>CATEGORY: School District and School Community Culture</b>	
3	In what new ways can we engage the community to participate actively in all aspects of the school district?
3	Do the community and the Board have the will to do what needs to be done to serve the children with quality and in a locally affordable manner?
5	How do we build upon our uniqueness of being a small community and small school district?
6	Does the community want to make a commitment to have a 'great' school?
7	How do we influence the community to embrace and seek diversity in our school district and community?
9	How might the community be influenced to see that "what was good enough for us" probably is not good enough for the young people of our community now?
9	How do we encourage more and/or bring back loyalty and support of the school district by more/all stakeholders of the community?
9	What are the census demographic characteristics of the school district community?
10	What is the community's definition of a 'quality education'?
12	How does the school district work with the community to make our community/district a place of 'choice' for new population to live?

*"Custom tools and research to aid a school district in defining a vision and decision options for serving students in the future."*

The Board of Education and the Superintendent recognize the question they discussed and worked together about on January 3 is important to the entire community. They commissioned the SES Study Team to meet with a Community Group to help a diversely representative group of community school district residents discuss and share answers to the same planning question.

In the spring of 2013, the Board of Education invited the school district community to consider volunteering to be a part of a Community Focus Group. The purpose of creating a Community Focus Group is to provide representation for all residents, taxpayers, and stakeholders of the school district.

Many of the community accepted the invitation to come together to discuss and share ideas about what is important in developing a plan for the future of Owen D. Young.

The following community volunteers came together on the evening of June 27 at the school. The Community Focus Group Members met with the SES Study Team—Paul Seversky, Doug Exley, and Sam Shevat. Paul, Doug, and Sam, as ‘guest outsiders’, listened, and recorded the information and perceptions of the community members regarding the planning question:

***What topics, questions, issues need to be addressed by the community and the Board of Education to be able to make the best decisions about the future delivery of instruction to the students of the Owen D. Young school district?***

<b>June 27 Owen D. Young Community Focus Group Members</b>	
Sue Jordan	retired ODY elementary teacher, grown children
Ron Smith	retired, member Comm Corp
Stephanie Mower	parent of 3, ODY grad
Nick Hula	retired
Bonnie Nestle	retired ODY elementary teacher, ODY grad, grown children
Sara Valenta	parent of 2, ODY grad
Sara VanDonnelen	parent of 2
Kathleen Peplinski	parent of 3, ODY grad
Cristina Peplinski	ODY graduate, parent of 1
Thomas Puskarenko	retired farmer, grown children, former ODY bus driver/custodian
Shirley Mower	retired farmer, grown children
Jeff Crouse	parent of 2
Steven Hula	parent of 3, ODY grad
Tracy Hula	parent of 2
Chad Hess	parent of 6
Gerald Manning	ODY grad, parent of 2
Jacqueline Snyder	parent of 6
Also attending: George Mower, Natalia Rogers and Jordan Clements of the Board of Education and James Picolla, ODY Superintendent	

Reported on the following page are the collective thoughts of the Community Focus Group Members concerning the planning question. All of the ‘answers’ to the question are important. The rank ordering is a preliminary scan to suggest which of the items might be given collaborative attention first, benchmarked to the perceptions of a representative group of district residents as of June 2013.

***What topics, questions, issues need to be addressed by the community and the Board of Education to be able to make the best decisions about the future delivery of instruction to the students of the Owen D. Young school district?***

Rank Order as of June 2013:	<b>Answers to the Question by the Community Focus Group:</b>
<b>CATEGORY: The Education Program</b>	
1	Can we enhance opportunities for children? scholastics/sports? Can we support what we offer? Can we increase offerings to better prepare students?
3	How can we/do we offer as much as possible for all students?
4	A concern about continued program cuts at ODY (ie business and accounting)
4	How can we move to more advanced/cutting edge opportunities for students as a small school?
5	Can we bring back and/or maintain enrichment programs (i.e. internships; New Visions)?
5	Does our current curriculum allow our students to be competitive with other students?
6	In 10 years, will we have a school?
7	How successful at the college level are our graduates? Are we preparing our kids?
10	Can we make transportation more efficient? (i.e. use of small buses when possible)
11	What are the possibilities to share services with other neighboring school districts?
12	Use technology as effectively, efficiently and creatively as possible
13	Why are district taxpayers denied access to Pre-K based on income? How can ODY offer more Pre-K sections?
14	There is too much testing in schools; can ODY be allowed to opt out?
15	Where will the athletic program be in the future?
16	What is the definition of a world-class education as it pertains to ODY?
18	Can we combine grades to offer more (i.e. technology; multi-age instruction for regular classroom)?
20	What is our student enrollment for the next 5-10 years?
20	Life skills opportunities for students and community members
21	How can we create respect and acknowledge vocational students to feel part of the school?
22	Use parent volunteers to fill gaps to serve students
23	How can field trips be supported?
<b>CATEGORY: Personnel</b>	
2	Accountability standards for staff
16	Are there different/better ways to make sure that the schoolteachers are effectively communicating with parents?
<b>CATEGORY: School District and School Community Culture</b>	
8	Can we collect data to learn how many households send students to school? (i.e. what are the census demographics of our school district?)
9	Can we collect data to learn how many students who live outside the district attend ODY and vice versa? How can we market ourselves? Public Relations?
10	Can taxpayers continue to afford our small school district?
12	Improve two-way communications: between school and community; school to parents; student progress reports; provide an opportunity for feedback to the school; provide more information from the school to the general public
12	How do we better communicate, appreciate, and celebrate our uniqueness as a school and how do we share the traditions with our students?
17	How do we influence getting broadband connectivity to our school and community?
19	Can ODY privatize? Or become a Charter School?
20	Use the building more as a community center
23	How can we continue our small school culture and continue to do so in the future?

*“Custom tools and research to aid a school district in defining a vision and decision options for serving students in the future.”*

**The top eight rank ordered answers to the Planning Question by the Board of Education and Superintendent, and the Community Focus Group:**

*What topics, questions, issues need to be addressed by the community and the Board of Education to be able to make the best decisions about the future delivery of instruction to the students of the Owen D. Young school district?*

<b>Rank Order</b>	<b>Perception of the Owen D. Young Board of Education and the Superintendent on January 3, 2013</b>	<b>Perception of a volunteer group of community members as a Community Focus Group on June 27, 2013</b>
1	How do we achieve the quality of education the community desires for our children?	Can we enhance opportunities for children? scholastics/sports? Can we support what we offer? Can we increase offerings to better prepare students?
2	How do we have the teachers and parents partner better to make academic/service decisions about each child together?	Accountability standards for staff
3	In what new ways can we engage the community to participate actively in all aspects of the school district?	How can we/do we offer as much as possible for all students?
3	Do the community and the Board have the will to do what needs to be done to serve the children with quality and in a locally affordable manner?	
4	Achieve the standard that each teacher of grades 7-12 has a degree in the subject he/she teaches; and that each teacher of grades K-6 have a major or minor in reading and/or math.	A concern about continued program cuts at ODY (i.e. business and accounting)
4		How can we move to more advanced/cutting edge opportunities for students as a small school?
5	How do we ensure that there is equity of opportunity for <b>all</b> pupils K-12?	Can we bring back and/or maintain enrichment programs (i.e. internships; New Visions)?
5	How do we build upon our uniqueness of being a small community and small school district?	Does our current curriculum allow our students to be competitive with other students?
6	How do we ensure the safety of our pupils is ongoing?	In 10 years, will we have a school?
6	Are there better ways to deliver instruction to our pupils that we do not practice now? Example: 'looping' allowing teachers to serve the same set of pupils for more than one year; teaming of subject area teachers to serve the same set of pupils together.	
6	Does the community want to make a commitment to have a 'great' school?	
7	Are we effectively using the resources we have now? How do we know and measure it?	How successful at the college level are our graduates? Are we preparing our kids?
7	How do we influence the community to embrace and seek diversity in our school district and community?	
8	How can we provide more opportunities (life experiences) for the pupils?	Can we collect data to learn how many households send students to school? (i.e. what are the census demographics of our school district?)