

# Oct. 17 school planning meeting in Watchung

By **ERIC HOSTETTLER**  
STAFF WRITER

**WATCHUNG**—The Board of Education of the grades K-8 school district is going back to the drawing board for a strategic planning meeting from 7 to 9 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 17, at Valley View School.

Superintendent Barbara Resko said the last strategic planning meeting took place in the fall of 2014, and resulted in the current five-year plan that runs through 2019.

“For the past several decades the district has undertaken the task of hosting formal strategic planning meetings,” Resko told the *Echoes-Sentinel*. “Those invited to attend the strategic planning meeting will serve as a focus group of community and school leaders. We will work together to identify both the strengths of the school district and the critical issues that we will face.”

The meeting will be one of several to be held over the next few years, she said. Meetings will focus on communicating ideas and values from the community and staff to implement in a new strategic plan once the current plan



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is concluded in 2019.

“We will work in both small and large groups, and discussion will lead us to a consensus document that will identify our community’s vision, identify critical issues, and develop goal areas focusing on the future for our district,” said Resko. “The Board of Education will use this document to help shape future goals for the district as we move forward.”

In addition to members of the school community, Resko said the district has reached out to Watchung community leaders to participate in the conversation.

The meetings have been a useful tool in the past, explained Board President Ellyn Margulies. She said she hopes the process attracts as much public participation as possible.

“Prior to the development of current Strategic

Plan 2015-19, Watchung Borough held a similar strategic planning meeting in which members of the community and school very successfully worked together taking a close look at our strengths, challenges and beliefs, as well as establishing future goals,” Margulies said in an email.

“Watchung is a wonderful, small, close-knit community. It is crucial for the community to have the opportunity to engage and to be an important part of the district’s planning process.”

The process is an essential one, she said.

“As time goes on it becomes increasingly important for district goals to be carefully identified within the constraints and challenges we now face. Careful planning must be seen through the paradigm created by increased costs and budgetary constraints. We are looking very forward to the Oct. 17 meeting.”

The district asks those planning to attend call the superintendent’s office at (908) 755-8121, or email [lgrafer@watchungschools.us](mailto:lgrafer@watchungschools.us), to confirm their attendance by Friday, Oct. 13.