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## Schools

### Shoreham-Wading River Superintendent Unveils New District Plan

The proposed plan includes evaluating English and math programs, getting student feedback and starting the budget review process months earlier.

By [Nicole Sequino](#) [Email the author](#) 9:30am [Print](#)

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Shoreham-Wading River School District Superintendent Steven Cohen unveiled the draft of his district plan for the 2011-12 school year, which now awaits the Board of Education's approval.

"It's basically the roadmap of where we hope to go for the school year," Cohen said.

Board members reviewed an updated version of Cohen's district plan at their meeting Tuesday evening following two workshops on the plan on Aug. 2 and 3, Board President William McGrath said.

The plan calls for evaluations of reading, writing and math programs in grades K-5, encouraging teachers to develop their own ideas for professional development, gathering student feedback through school surveys and beginning the budget review process as early as October.

Residents were particularly interested in Cohen's plan for early budgetary talks at the board's meeting Tuesday night. Budget workshops among school board members are planned to commence in March, followed by a public vote on the budget in May.

"I think the idea of an early budget meeting is a good one," said Shoreham resident Anthony DeLouise, a past contender for the school board. "The sooner that you can get the community's ideas and comments and start integrating them into the budgetary process, the better we're all going to be."

For English language arts, Cohen's district plan calls for determining which teaching methods best assist students in grades K-2 in learning to read, and which methods improve reading comprehension in grades 3-5.

Board trustee Marie Lindell questioned Cohen about his ELA initiatives at the middle and high school level. Cohen replied that the focus at the secondary level for this school year will be on engaging students' interests in reading and writing.

The purpose of evaluating the district's math program, Cohen said, is to identify the instructional methods that help students apply mathematical principles in that subject area as well as other subjects such as science and technology. Faculty will also incorporate differentiated math instruction "to address the variety of learning styles," such as real-world problems, Cohen said.

Teachers will also be encouraged to form their own professional development, he added. He explained that teachers will examine their own work, identify any problems, and collaborate together to find solutions.

"We're not looking to reinvent the wheel here," Cohen said. "We'll take a look at what other districts are doing on the Island, but I think this is a process that makes better teachers."

Cohen also told the Board that he will seek to obtain student feedback through in-school surveys on elective courses, extracurricular activities, and other factors that may affect their learning. This will serve as a factor in developing elective courses and after-school clubs and activities for the 2013-14 school year, he said.

Following the Board's approval of his district plan, Cohen will host a series of public forums. The first, "Free Society and Public Education: The Link Between Good Public Education and Free, Prosperous Communities," will be held during the Sept. 20 school board meeting.

The next two open forums include, "How Schools Work," scheduled in October, and "Paying for Public Education," scheduled in November.

The school board will vote on whether to adopt the plan, according to board president McGrath. The public can view the superintendent's plan on the [district's website](#).