



Dear Gervais Community Members,

During the last 19 months, at times it may have seemed that our entire lives have been consumed with issues related to COVID-19 and the global pandemic, local natural disasters such as wildfires and ice storms, and a highly volatile political climate. However, a committee comprised of Gervais School District staff, students, and community members spent some of the last 19 months working together to create the three-year strategic plan found in the following pages. This group of more than 30 people dedicated more than 20 hours of their time crafting a road map for the district that reflects values centered deeply in traditions and community connections. Multiple listening sessions held in-person and through Zoom meetings, focus groups as well as electronic surveys such as the Healthy Teen Survey and the YouthTruth Survey provided opportunities for other community members, parents, students, staff, and business owners to engage in the process to guide this work.

In a more “normal” time, the strategic plan would contain goals and measures for three years. However, because of the uncertainty in our day-to-day operations, the committee felt it wise to outline the goals for the coming school year and create specific measures and performance indicators including who will be responsible for monitoring each goal. The Gervais School District Board of Directors will receive quarterly updates on the progress being made toward achieving these goals. This living document will assist all of us in building the steps necessary to guide the Gervais School District in creating educational opportunities for each student to achieve their very best and graduate from the district with not only a plan for the future but the skills to carry out that plan. As the 2021-22 school year ends, the committee will reconvene to evaluate the progress made in Year 1 of the plan and then map out what will be required of all stakeholders during the next two years to meet our goals.

During this work, the district logo was also redesigned to reflect our core values of equity, integrity, excellence, relationships and community. We believe these values form the foundation of the educational system in Gervais and reflect the community's principles when the first Gervais school was established in 1834.

The City of Gervais and surrounding communities are at the cusp of change and growth. In preparation for this, the new strategic plan proactively positions the district and the educational system to continue to be viewed as an asset in the community and a draw to families who are considering the benefits of a small-town experience.

The care and commitment shown by the members of the committee and the community was impressive and heartwarming and further demonstrated the feeling that the district “is small but mighty.”

Sincerely,

Dandy Stevens
Superintendent

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Appreciation, thank you, and conclusions

Presented by Community Volunteers, GSD Staff, and Colonna Education Consulting Services

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The district serves approximately 1,300 pre-school through 12th grade students in Frontier Charter Academy, Samuel Brown Academy, Gervais Elementary School, Gervais Middle School, and Gervais High School.



Gervais community and district background

In 1834 the first school in Oregon was opened on Joseph Gervais' farm. Gervais was a prominent French-Canadian settler in the Willamette Valley and he helped organize a provisional government in Oregon. The land the school was on was located near but not in the town of Gervais, however the town was named in his honor and the school district, established in 1871, was named after the town. In 1902 a fire destroyed all but two buildings in the city's business district. In 1922 Gervais Union High School District #1 was established and included Pioneer, St. Louis, Gervais, and Parkersville School Districts. In 1928 Fairfield and Eldriedge School Districts were added. These districts continued to exist independently but each of them sent their students on to Gervais Union High School. A ballot measure passed in 1992 that allowed the merger of the high school district with nearby elementary school districts. Gervais School District #1 was officially created in 1993 with Pioneer, Brooks, North Howell, Eldriedge, Gervais and Parkersville Elementary School Districts joining in. Gervais is located four miles south of Woodburn and 15 miles north of Salem in Marion County, Oregon. It is at 184 feet of elevation and its last population count listed 2,620 individuals. The city proper is situated on only .39 square miles of land.

The district serves approximately 1,300 pre-school through 12th grade students in Frontier Charter Academy, Samuel Brown Academy, Gervais Elementary School, Gervais Middle School, and Gervais High School. Seven different languages are spoken by students and Hispanic/Latino students account for 54% of the student population. The district has focused on 3rd grade students reading at grade level, 8th grade students meeting or exceeding state standards in mathematics, and a 100% high school graduation rate. Student engagement and rigorous daily instruction are priorities. Small class sizes helped to earn high state marks for improved individual student progress in grades 3-8.

Sources: State Department of Education, Oregon Historical Society, Brooks Historical Society, Michelle Zelenka, District Long-Range Facilities Plan 2020-21, The Oregon Blue Book, and Wikipedia

Process used for strategic plan development

The strategic planning work started in December 2020. It originated from a commitment by Superintendent Dandy Stevens and the Gervais School District Board members to undertake a comprehensive ten-month process to review the district's strengths and opportunities for improvement. A multi-year, strategic plan was developed and will become operational in September 2021. It is scheduled to continue through the end of the 2023-24 school year. GSD contracted with Jerome Colonna to facilitate the process.

The first step was to put a diverse and representative District Strategic Planning Team in place. This 16-member team held six, three-hour meetings starting on December 16, 2020, and finished on June 1, 2021. The initial task was to identify trends from the Gervais School District #1 Strategic Plan Background Data Report. The six survey questions asked respondents about what areas need improvement, what the district is doing well, what core values should be the foundation for the plan, how the district can better serve all students, how the district can better connect with community members, and a final open question asked for any other comments.

Based on the survey data, the team started developing the first four individual components of the report:

- **District Core Values**
- **District Mission Statement**
- **District Vision Statement**
- **District Strategic Goals**

The team completed their work after the strategic goals were developed and Superintendent Stevens then appointed the District Implementation Work Group to refine the goals, identify performance indicators for each goal, select measurements for each performance indicator, agree on accountability/monitoring guidelines, and finally, designate tasks to be completed in the first school year (2021-2022) of the multi-year plan. This group had two, four-hour meetings and finished their work on August 10, 2021.



In mid-August Superintendent Stevens, and Jerome Colonna, consultant, collaboratively wrote two drafts of the plan. The second draft was presented to the GSD School Board members and modifications were made based on board recommendations. The plan was then turned over to Quon Design and Communication Inc. for final design, formatting, and professional printing. The completed document was placed on the front page of the district website. Presentations were scheduled for each district school and various representative groups throughout the greater Gervais School District community.

District core values

Gervais School District's fundamental beliefs and core values represent the ethics and ideals that form the foundation of its everyday culture. Agreed upon core values are the basis from which work should be performed and how employees and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves. The team and survey respondents identified several core values and beliefs. However, the five listed below were determined to be so important that they will be systematized district-wide over the three-year period this strategic plan is carried out. Even in Oregon's ever-changing political, economic, wildfire/climate change, health crisis landscapes

these five beliefs and values should stay constant and influence all aspects of the district's business. They represent the compass from which the district wants to navigate its mission, follow its vision, achieve strategic goals, measure progress, utilize resources, hire staff, and make major decisions.

After lengthy discussions in portions of three meetings the District Strategic Planning Team members selected the core values listed below. The Gervais School District #1 Strategic Plan Background Data Report, completed in February 2021, was a helpful reference the team used at each of its six meetings.

Through collaborating with our families and the communities we serve, the Gervais School District will meet individual student needs by upholding the following district core values:



Equity... through inclusive practices, we leverage our diversity to establish opportunities for all



Integrity... is based on trust we must earn, accountability for our actions, and transparency that is undeniable



Excellence... students achieve from high expectations and staff modeling grit, perseverance, and a love of learning



Relationships... are centered on respect and nurtured through kindness and communication



Community... we gain unity through our shared generational values



District Mission Statement

A mission statement identifies the purpose of an organization. The statement below clearly communicates what has heart and meaning in the Gervais School District. It captures the district's culture in a few, well-chosen words so that it is remembered. The GSD mission statement was built from the Strategic Plan Background Data Report and new district core values. The mission statement reads:

Within our growing, diverse community we sow the seeds of opportunities to raise prepared, resilient students.

District Vision Statement

Gervais School District's vision statement is a concise description of what it wants to achieve during the next three school years (2021-2024). Its purpose is to inspire, energize, motivate, and stimulate all facets of the organization. It is intended to serve as a guide for selected current and future actions GSD is recommended to take. The statement focuses on the district's most hopeful, successful, and ideal future. It is not about what is already in place or what might easily be implemented. The words challenge the status quo and influence significant system changes. Like the district mission statement, it is designed to say a lot in just a few words. While the sentence does not indicate how GSD will achieve its strategic goals, it does set a definite direction for the overall continuous improvement process.

The planning team selected conceptual ideas for the vision statement from the Strategic Plan Background Data Report, district core beliefs and mission statement. The vision statement reads:

Graduating resilient, responsible students whose learning extends to the global community beyond Gervais.

District logo

The new district logo (right) was created during the strategic planning process. It is intended to be the face of the district and send a message forward of hope for the very best for each GSD student's future. The logo is meant to be relevant, memorable, positive, and communicate district core values in a very rapid way. Research indicates the most effective logos get their message across within two seconds. The graduation cap aligns with the first phrase in the district vision statement: graduating resilient, responsible, students. Notice each of the three students are of a different height but that they are supported to be at the same overall height. These differing needs are represented in the last phrase of the district core value equity wording: we leverage our diversity to establish opportunities for all. Green is the most attractive color to the human eye and is used to signify the agricultural base of Gervais along with the first phrase of the strategic goal 1: cultivate equity by honoring diversity. The three hills make a level playing field for each student. In 1834 the first school in Oregon was opened on Joseph Gervais' farm and this little-known fact is duly noted below the logo graphic.



The logo will be put on the district website, letterheads, end of digital messages, signs, invoices and forms, banners on school entrances, social media profiles, vehicles, nametags, apparel, and anywhere else appropriate.

Gervais School District strategic goals, performance indicators, and measures



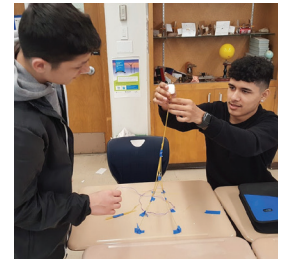
Strategic Goals

If an organization wants to be successful it needs to set challenging goals and achieve them on time. Without strategic goals most organizations experience a lack of focus and direction. Goals provide benchmarks so accomplishments can be measured. Goal setting was the most important part of Gervais School District's overall strategic plan development. Two different groups spent a great deal of time on the development and prioritization of the individual, multi-year, strategic goals that follow. The two groups limited the number of goals to four (4) so what was selected will have a tight focus and resources will be aligned with actions to drive the district vision. An emphasis was placed on clarity and achievability. The goals were formed from and connected to the district survey data, values, and mission and vision statements. The key function of the four strategic goals is to guide achievement of the GSD vision through 2024. Being strategic is about making difficult choices regarding what to do and what not to do.

Performance Indicators

The Gervais School District Strategic Goals have a total of 11 performance indicators. Performance indicators break goal efforts into manageable units and represent steps in the achievement action

plan. They are the key tasks selected to accomplish the goals. Identifying key performance indicators is a proven way to measure and assist what progress is being made toward achieving a specific strategic goal. Without a series of measurable performance indicators, the strategic plan would fail, and the district would not have precise data to know at what level it is achieving its goals. Performance indicators are the most important component of the plan to report to GSD constituents and especially school board members.



Measures

To help gain success, this strategic plan must be specifically monitored so that periodically performance indicators can be easily assessed. The measures are quantitative and qualitative factors used to gauge progress being made. They not only show progress or lack thereof, they also provide a tool to determine if adjustments to the goals, indicators, or measures should be considered. The team and work group were careful to select the most appropriate measure for each performance indicator.

2021-2022 School Year Implementation of Gervais School District's Strategic Plan

GOAL 1:

The district will promote social and emotional growth, support the mental well-being of all, and create an environment of empathy and respect.

Performance Indicator 1a: Identify the district's greatest social, emotional, and mental health needs using BASEline data, Devereux Students Strengths Assessment, YouthTruth Survey, Oregon Healthy Teen Survey, and various focus groups.

Measure: Gather data from above surveys, groups, etc., and create a needs assessment report.

Start: September 2021 Finish: January 2022

Performance Indicator 1b: Using the report from 1a, develop a prioritized list of greatest needs that include estimated costs and timelines for accomplishments.

Measure: Complete prioritized needs, costs, and timeline report.

Start: January 2022 Finish: March 2022

Performance Indicator 1c: The district will create an action plan to meet each identified priority and recommended task for implementation.

Measure: Action plan is completed.

Start: April 2022 Finish: June 2022

Persons responsible for monitoring: Andrew Aman and Kay Gage

GOAL 2:

Cultivate equity by honoring diversity, using inclusive practices, and supporting students to achieve their unique potential.

Performance Indicator 2a: The District Equity Committee will complete the GSD Equity Lens and begin its district-wide application.

Measure: The District Equity Committee completes development of the GSD Equity Lens with guidelines for its use.

Start: September 2021 Finish: February: 2022

Performance Indicator 2b: Initiate implementation of ongoing, district-wide professional development of equity practices.

Measure: Start professional development.

Start: September 2021 Finish: May 2022 (ongoing)

Performance Indicator 2c: Each student will have a personalized learning plan that focuses on their unique strengths.

Measure: Apply to all grade 7-12 students

Start: September 2021 Finish: June 2022 (ongoing)

Persons responsible for monitoring: Sylvia Valentine-Garcia and Ken Stott

2021-2022 School Year Implementation of Gervais School District's Strategic Plan

continued

GOAL 3:

Link preschool through 12th grade curriculum to state standards, select and apply the best instructional strategies, and use assessments to measure student progress and adjust instruction.

Performance Indicator 3a: The district will align all curriculum vertically and horizontally to state standards.

Measure: Language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and counseling curricula will be aligned to state standards.

Start: September 2021 Finish: June 2022

Performance Indicator 3b: Staff will help select and prioritize instructional strategies to match with the newly aligned curriculum.

Measure: Adopt prioritized instructional strategies.

Start: February 2022 Finish: June 2022

Performance Indicator 3c: Analyze current assessment practices and policies and determine where adjustments can be made to provide the greatest improvements to classroom instruction.

Measure: Complete analysis and make necessary changes to district-wide assessment program.

Start: February 2022 Finish: May 2022

Persons responsible for monitoring: Creighton Helms and Bonny Atwood

GOAL 4:

Use Long-Range Facility Plan data to select facilities most in need of improvement with regard to ongoing safety, optimal learning space, and enrichment for students, staff, and community members.

Performance Indicator 4a: The Pre-Bond Planning Committee will present a prioritized facility needs assessment report to GSD Board members that include estimated costs and an implementation timeline for approval.

Measure: Board report presented. Report is an action item presented for approval.

Start: November 2021 Finish: December 2021

Performance Indicator 4b: Based on board member approval and the assistance of bond counsel, architectural guidance, and transparent communication strategies present a district construction bond to voters.

Measure: Start process. Construction Bond on ballot.

Start: January 2022 Finish: May 2022

Persons responsible for monitoring: Dandy Stevens and Bob Martin

Implementation and accountability

As mentioned to the GSD Board and planning team at the start of this process, most strategic plans do not achieve their stated goals. According to research in the field, only about 20% of all public and private sector plans are fully implemented on time, if at all. Accountability measures must be put in place to ensure implementation steadily progresses. During the implementation process it is essential to monitor the success and challenges of the goals, performance indicators, and measures. Periodically it may be necessary to retool the plan and its assumptions if any element is not progressing satisfactorily. It is important to remember, creating a plan is the easy part in comparison to the difficulty of achieving its strategic goals through implementation of the performance indicators.

The Gervais School District Strategic Plan was created to be successful. The following list is a combination of suggestions from the literature, the District Implementation Team, and the consultant that will assist the district to meet its strategic goals by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

- Since during the next three school years the plan involves new responsibilities and a significant amount of additional resources, district leadership must determine what it is currently doing now that it will stop doing once the strategic plan implementation starts.
- The board should hold the superintendent accountable for showing measurable progress on the overall plan and the superintendent should hold the individuals in charge the goals and performance indicators accountable for gaining measurable progress.
- The plan needs to be carefully reviewed and modified as necessary by April of each school year. A Strategic Plan Oversight Committee could be formed to take on this responsibility and should have the superintendent, at least one board member, and multiple members of those involved in the development of the plan as participants.
- The rollout of the plan should include influential teachers, classified staff, team and work group members during early communication efforts.



- The GSD General Fund Budget must be aligned with the plan's resource needs for each new year of the plan.
- Time could be periodically used during professional learning community meetings to discuss strategic plan progress. The findings could then be reported out to the individual school faculty, then to the Oversight Committee, and on to the board.
- The district needs to carryout actions based on specific strategies detailed in this plan and be responsible for collecting and analyzing data to measure progress. Gervais School District Board members should receive periodic (every four months is recommended) progress report presentations that ideally include the following information for each performance indicator:
 1. *Amount of progress made since the last report based on measures specific to each indicator*
 2. *Challenges with facilities, technology, funding, professional development, etc.*
 3. *Recommendations for possible modifications of performance indicators, measures, and/or strategic goals.*
 4. *An outline of planned activities from the date of the most current report up to when the next report will be presented.*
- It is recommended that after each progress report the information above be posted to the school website, shared with media, and communicated to constituents.

In February 2021 the district published a companion document, Gervais School District #1 Strategic Plan Background Data Report, that was used extensively throughout the development of this report. It and this report can be viewed at on the district website at www.gervais.k12.or.us

Appreciation, thank you, and conclusions

A sincere thank you goes out to all those who contributed to the ten-month process involved in creating the District Strategic Plan for the 2021-2024 School Years. A special thank you is sent to the 16 members of the District Strategic Planning Team and the 13 members of the District Implementation Work Group. Several other staff members were involved in making the many Zoom and in-person meetings possible. None of this strategic work would have been accomplished without strong commitment from Gervais School District Board of Directors and the visionary focus Superintendent Dandy Stevens has for systemic, multi-year improvement.

This report provides a North Star for prioritized, large-scale improvements the district has comprehensively identified. It communicates clarity

for the new direction of the district by aligning the GSD Board of Directors with the superintendent and both the board and Superintendent Stevens with certified and classified staff. This alignment will strengthen over time through widespread agreement on district core values and the four strategic goals. Implemented with fidelity, the strategic plan will result in additional use of long-term perspectives, greater productivity, clearer communication, improved decision-making, more efficient use of resources, and it will attract students, potential employees, and outside funding to the district.

This strategic plan provides a focused direction for what GSD wants to become and how it can get there over the next three years.



Graduating resilient, responsible students whose learning extends to the global community beyond Gervais.