



Gervais School District

ESTABLISHED 1834



District Strategic Plan • 2021-2024
Gervais School District #1
September 2022





Dear Gervais School District Community Members,

In June of 2021, a group of 15 professionals led by an independent consultant gathered in the school district’s office to review the progress made during Year 1 of the district’s strategic plan. While the initial plan was created in the throws of COVID-19 and implementation of Year 1 goals was often slowed because of pandemic restrictions, Year 2 goals are written with the focus on creating momentum for learning and a school system which is responsive to parents, supportive of staff and ensures academic experiences meet the needs of all students.

The Gervais School District Board of Directors adopted a “Resolution and Commitment to Educational Access and Inclusion” this spring. This stance reinforces the district’s commitment to engage all stakeholders with respect and establish close partnerships throughout the entire community.

During Year 1 of the Strategic Plan, the district made significant progress on the goals and as a result many of the performance indicators and measures of the goals were adapted in order to provide opportunities to move closer to the achieving the goals established in the first year of the plan. Overall, goals will not be revisited or revised until the end of Year 3 of the plan which is June of 2024. These efforts are the first time in more than a decade in which the district has committed efforts for multiple years on building a vision and a direction for the district. This long-range planning and direction allows the district to build momentum in growing an educational system that is fluid, meets the needs of staff and students, and addresses issues and barriers in a timely manner.

The 2022-23 school year will still include challenges brought about by the pandemic and additional funding sources provided by the federal government. The tasks at hand including using these additional financial resources to maximize the progress toward district goals. Additionally, Winter of 2023 will usher in a new Governor and a budget for the coming biennium predicted by state experts to be a possible “financial cliff” because federal funds have created a false sense of financial stability. It will be imperative to use all available resources to create systems that are not dependent on additional funding and are sustainable regardless of staffing levels.

While a failed bond attempt and high inflation has made progress toward completing the fourth goal more difficult, the district sees this challenge as an opportunity to bring more members of the community together in support of the district. The Gervais School District, as the largest employer in the City of Gervais and within the district boundaries, will continue to promote itself as a valuable asset that needs nurturing from all stakeholders in order to preserve the rich history, traditions and sense of community Gervais is know for.

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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Jill Woodland, School Psychologist



The district serves approximately 1,300 pre-school through 12th grade students in Frontier Charter Academy, 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, 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 became 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 (2021-20202) 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



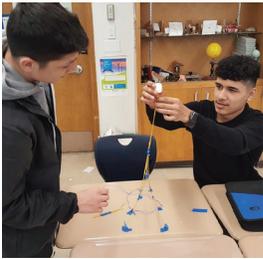
Strategic Goals

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.

Year Two, 2022-23, Performance Indicators and Metrics for 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. (Individuals responsible are Creighton Helms and Kay Gage.)

Performance Indicator 1a: Create and publish a district-wide calendar of events that can be used by students, families, staff, and community members. Advertise upcoming events to enhance maximum participation.

Implementation Measure 1a: Complete the calendar by September 31, 2022, and post it on the district website by October 3, 2022.

Performance Indicator 1b: Collect Social Emotional Learning (SEL) data from the 2022-23 school year. Analyze the data and update action plan for the 2023-24 school year along with a calendar of events.

Implementation Measure 1b: Update action plan and calendar by May 31, 2023, and report the progress of the action plan to the board at their November 2023 meeting.

Performance Indicator 1c: Prioritize the SEL curriculum and associated professional development based on the highest needs found in the 2022-23 data.

Implementation Measure 1c: Use data from 2022-23 performance indicator 1c to update SEL district curriculum and 2023-24 school year action plan.

GOAL 2:

Cultivate equity by honoring diversity, using inclusive practices, and supporting students to achieve their unique potential. (Individuals responsible are Andrew Aman, Dusty Price, and Dandy Stevens.)

Performance Indicator 2a: The GSD Equity Committee will use the Resolution and Commitment to Educational Access and Inclusion, adopted by the GSD Board of Directors, to identify GSD's equity lens guiding questions and begin their application.

Implementation Measure 2a: By February 28, 2023, the equity questions will be completed and ready for districtwide use.

Performance Indicator 2b: Continue offering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) focused professional development opportunities for all staff and board members.

Implementation Measure 2b: By October 17, 2022, each school administrator and respective school site council will have mutually selected and scheduled professional development topics for the remainder of the school year.

Performance Indicator 2c: All administrators, the counseling team, and club advisors will guide honoring and promoting educational access and inclusion through day-to-day practices and scheduled events.

Implementation Measure 2c: On or before May 15 convene the GSD Equity Committee to assess the 2022-23 school year districtwide effort to improve its focus on educational access and use of day-to-day inclusive practices. Document the committee's assessment of progress and present a report to the school board in June 2023.

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

continued

GOAL 3:

Link the district's preschool through grade 12 curriculum to state standards, select and apply the best instructional strategies, and use assessments to measure student progress and adjust instruction. (Individuals responsible are Toni Johnson, Dandy Stevens and Bonny Atwood)

Performance Indicator 3a: Align all district scope and sequence documents to Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) academic content standards.

Implementation Measure 3a: All GSD curriculum documents will be aligned to ODE's academic content standards on or before February 1, 2023, and posted to district website.

Performance Indicator 3b: Select instructional strategies that help students make significant growth to achieve grade level standards in core subject content.

Implementation Measure 3b: Complete selection of instructional strategies, publish strategies on the district website, and provide appropriate professional development for staff by March 1, 2023.

Performance Indicator 3c: Implement the newly adopted i-Ready K-12 diagnostic program, analyze results, and make necessary adjustments to instruction.

Implementation Measure 3c: Complete the implementation, analysis, and adjustments by June 1, 2023, and report findings to the school board at their June 2023 meeting.

GOAL 4:

Use Long-Range Facility Planning Committee data to select district facilities most in need of improvement regarding ongoing safety issues, optimal learning space, and increased student, staff, and community use. (Individuals responsible are Dandy Stevens and board members.)

Performance Indicator 4a: Conduct research on May 2022 bond election facilities' improvement trends. Document projects voters supported and those they did not support.

Implementation Measure 4a: Start bond research in July 2022. Present findings to the school board at their November 2022 meeting.

Performance Indicator 4b: Review Long-Range Facility Planning Committee's updates and assessment information on current General Obligation (GO) Bond labor and materials' costs, use findings to prioritize construction projects, and estimate costs for a future bond measure.

Implementation Measure 4b: Report updates and assessment data to the school board at the November 2022 board meeting.

Performance Indicator 4c: Create a campaign that will inform voters of the benefits students, staff, and community members will receive from improvements to district facilities.

Implementation Measure 4c: Start a GO Bond communication campaign beginning in November 2022 using multiple approaches to encourage district residents to vote in the May 2023 election.

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 carry out 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

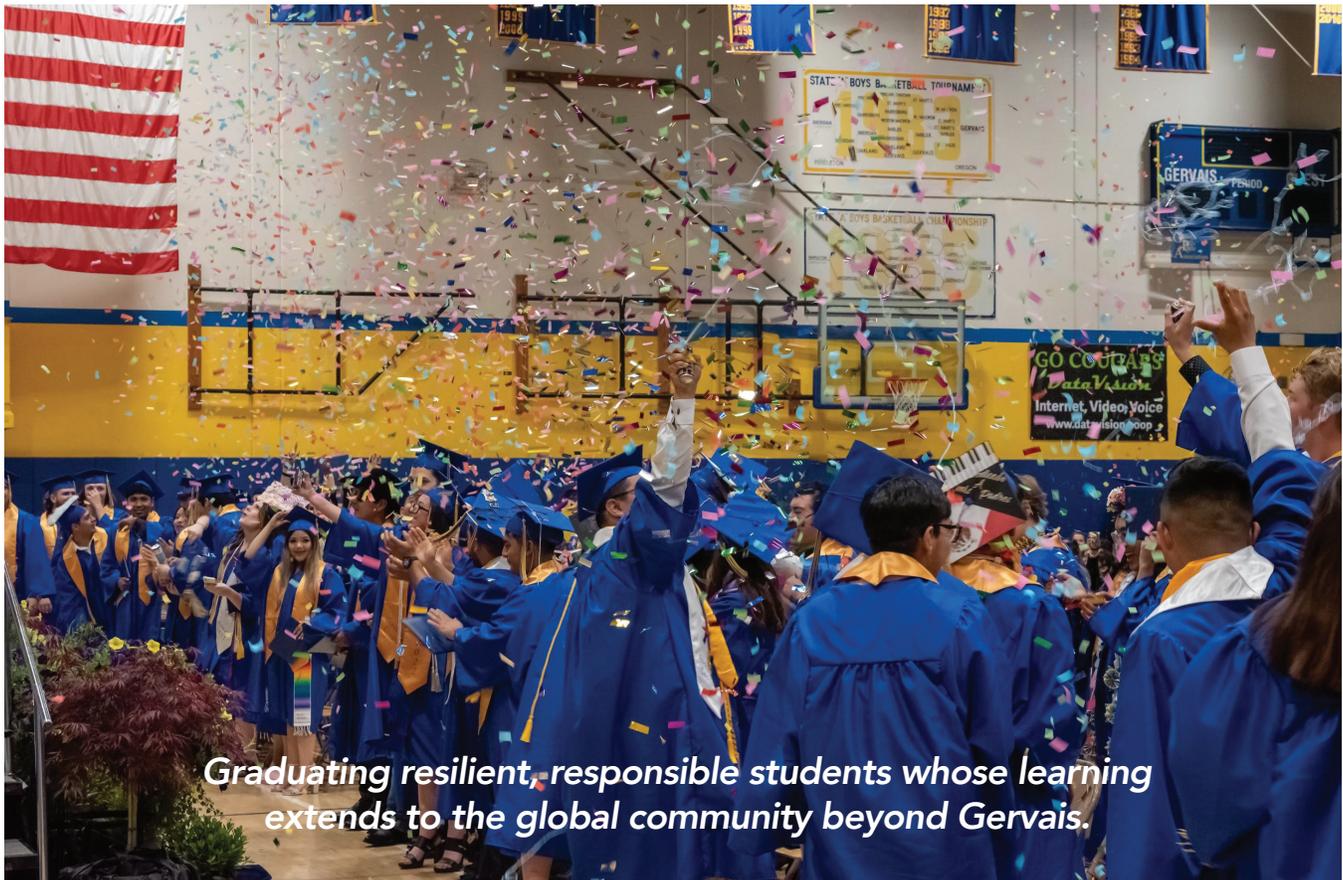
Appreciation, thank you, and conclusions

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 more than 50 staff members, students, parents and community members who have contributed to this work during over the last three years. 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.