



# District Strategic Plan • 2021-2024

## Gervais School District #1

July 2023







Dear Gervais School District Community Members,

For the second year in a row, a group of 18 individuals spent an entire day working with an independent consultant to review Year 2 of our Strategic Plan Goals. During this time together the group reviewed performance indicators and implementation measures in relation to the four goals, and determined what next steps are necessary to move the district forward. Year 2 goals were written in anticipation of significant learning loss for students as well as challenges in social and emotional areas due to their experiences during the pandemic.

If you have never read the Strategic Plan or it's been a while since you reviewed it, I would encourage you to take a few moments to read the information found in the document. It provides readers with a clear outline of our district level goals and how those goals were identified, as well as who is responsible for the monitoring and progress toward those goals. What is especially impactful about this Strategic Plan is the level of accountability shared by specific staff members and the district's Board of Directors. The goals are located under the link "Strategic Planning Committee" on the district's website.

During Year 2 of the Strategic Plan, the district continued to make important gains towards achieving the goals. As has been true of the Gervais School District many times in the last four years, the goals represent ideals that the State of Oregon has recently identified as important areas of focus for educational systems statewide. Gervais continues to anticipate the needs of students and staff and makes plans to address those needs in a proactive fashion, which allows the district to remain ahead of how the state's education focus is trending. For example, even prior to the pandemic, the district had identified the need to address social and emotional learning and hired additional mental health staff in the Spring of 2020. The overall goals will not be revised or revisited until Spring of 2024; however, the performance indicators and progress measures have been adjusted the last two years as the district moves closer to achieving the goals.

Throughout the 2022-23 school year, staff received extensive professional development opportunities to fully utilize the new curriculum purchased for English Language Arts and to understand the new software assessment systems and the data generated by those systems. These efforts were instrumental in aligning instructional strategies used by teachers and creating very focused efforts to maximize instructional time, while at the same time providing rich extracurricular programming. This year, the district hosted several major community events that saw record numbers of parents and other community members in the schools, meeting staff and getting hands on experiences in relation to their children's education.

While financial instability continues to be a concern as the State of Oregon again failed to fully fund schools resulting in reductions within the district, the school board and administrators work diligently to maintain the workforce and offer the programming necessary to provide a well-rounded education. If not for the increased funding seen from the Student Investment Account, a separate grant provided by the state, the district would be hard pressed to be competitive with neighboring districts while at the same time creating attractive work environments for employees and educational opportunities for students.

A second failed bond attempt has again blocked progress on the fourth goal which becomes more dire with every passing year. The state does not provide sufficient funding for building repairs let alone replacements. There are very few outside funding sources to offset the costs associated with construction. The primary mechanism in the state is done through bond dollars. The district will continue to engage in public conversations about the priorities of the voters and all stakeholders living within the Gervais School District to determine if there is common ground everyone can agree upon to move this goal forward. During this past year, the district has continued to demonstrate it is a valuable asset to this community and one that needs more financial support from the voters living within its boundaries in order to remain viable. Now is the time to come together and solve this problem.

Sincerely,

**Dandy Stevens**  
*Superintendent*

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

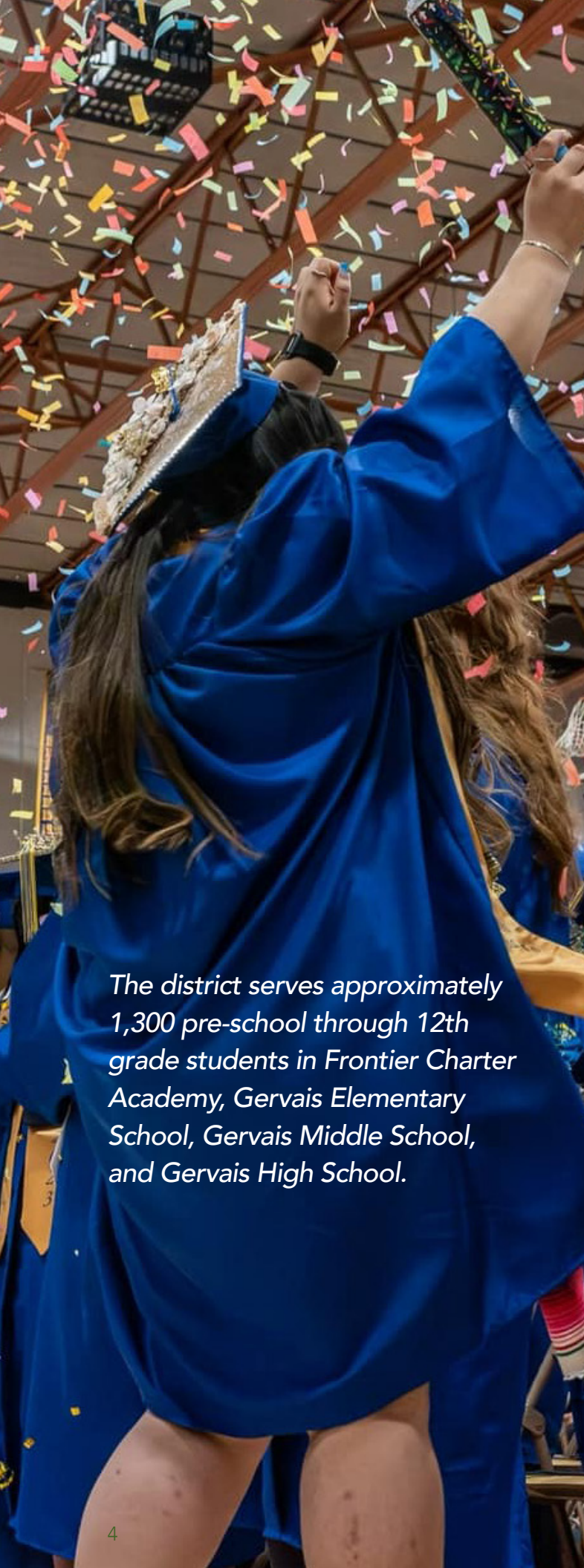
### Members of the Year Two and Three Work Groups

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Fenya Aman, *Middle School Behavior Specialist*  
Bonny Atwood, *TOSA—Teaching and Learning*  
Tucker Brack, *High School Teacher*  
Andre Brown, *High School Instructional Assistant*  
Jerry Colonna, *Strategic Planning Consultant*  
Kalynn Dees, *Elementary School TOSA—Attendance and Behavior*  
Amber Enfield, *High School Teacher*  
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Kay Gage, *Elementary School TOSA—Attendance and Behavior*  
Raul Gomez, *Elementary School Teacher*  
Holly Hamlin, *High School Teacher*  
Stacey Helm, *Elementary School Teacher*  
Creighton Helms, *Director of Special Education and Federal Programs*  
Lucas Hill, *Middle School Teacher*  
Toni Johnson, *Middle School Teacher and Principal*  
Lisa Ludwikoski, *Elementary School Teacher*  
Bob Martin, *Middle School Principal*  
Dusty Price, *Elementary School Principal*  
Cindy Smith, *Elementary School Teacher and TOSA—Reading*  
Dandy Stevens, *Superintendent*  
Stephanie So, *Elementary School Teacher and TOSA—Science/Math*  
Ken Stott, *High School Principal*  
Jill Woodard, *School Psychologist*

### Members of the District Implementation Work Group

Andrew Aman, *High School Assistant Principal*  
Vilma Chan, *Counselor*  
Jerome Colonna, *Strategic Planning Consultant*  
Mercedes Cruz, *English Language Development Teacher*  
Amber Enfield, *High School Teacher*  
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Bob Martin, *Middle School Principal*  
Dandy Stevens, *Superintendent*  
Ken Stott, *High School Principal*  
Jill Woodard, *School Psychologist*





*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.*

## 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 (2021-2022) 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

**G**ervais 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 Three, 2023-24, 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 Kalynn Dees.**

**Performance Indicator 1A:** Prioritize the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and data based on the highest needs identified during the 2022-2023 school year.

**Implementation Measure 1A:** Update the district SEL curriculum and data action plan and calendar by October 31, 2023, and report progress on the action plan to the board at their November 16, 2024, meeting.

**Performance Indicator 1B:** Develop a professional development suite including mandatory and elective training for all staff with a focus on trauma-informed best practices for the 2023-2024 school year.

**Implementation Measure 1B:** Complete the professional development calendar by September 22, 2023, and post it on the district website by October 3, 2023.

**Performance Indicator 1C:** Create, publish, and distribute academic intervention guides for staff and community members to reference when students are experiencing difficulties due to social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.

**Implementation Measure 1C:** Complete the academic guides and share with all staff and the community members by May 31, 2024.

## GOAL 2:

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

**Performance Indicator 2a:** The GSD Equity Committee will train all district staff to use the GSD Equity Lens and will facilitate its use in various district and building decision-making teams.

**Performance Measure 2a:** District staff will be trained to use the GSD Equity Lens during inservice week in August 2023. The GSD Equity Team will facilitate its use by implementing collaboratively created decision-making teams (at least 2 teams per building) before May 30, 2024.

**Performance Indicator 2b:** Provide diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) focused professional development for all district staff and school board members.

**Performance Measure 2b:** The district will provide quarterly staff professional development (September, November 2023, January, and March 2024) focused on cultural education delivered by community members about various cultural practices, values, and unique needs.

**Performance Indicator 2c:** All district staff will promote educational access and inclusion through day-to-day practices, communication, and activities.

**Performance Measure 2c:** The district will receive feedback from a random representative sample of students and families by October 30, 2023, and again by May 30, 2024, about how accessible and inclusive district policies, calendars, meals, communications, buildings, and activities are. This information will be presented to the school board at their November 16, 2023, and June 20, 2024 meetings.

## 2023-2024 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, Bonny Atwood, Cindy Smith and Stephanie So.**

**Performance Indicator 3a:** Publish revised district scope and sequence documents for each content area that is rigorous and aligned to Oregon Department of Education (ODE) curriculum standards.

**Implementation Measure 3a:** All GSD curriculum documents will be aligned to ODE's horizontal and vertical standards and published on the district website by February 1, 2024.

**Performance Indicator 3b:** Identify three instructional strategies that help all students use content specific vocabulary when speaking and writing so they achieve grade level standards in core subject matter content.

**Implementation Measure 3b:** Complete selection of instructional strategies, publish strategies on the district website, and provide professional development by May 1, 2024.

**Performance Indicator 3c:** Implement the adopted K-12 diagnostic programs, analyze results, and use online skill building and lesson components in the programs. Make instructional adjustments to provide additional opportunities for students to achieve mastery in standards. .

**Implementation Measure 3c:** Complete the implementation, analysis, and adjustments by June 1, 2024. Present findings to the school board at their August 2024 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/ community use. Individuals responsible are Dandy Stevens and board members.**

**Performance Indicator 4a:** Conduct research regarding stakeholders' priorities, perceptions, and expectations of the school district and its programs.

**Implementation Measure 4a:** Start research and data collection in July 2023 conducted by an independent 3rd party. Present findings to the school board at the August 29, 2023, work session.

**Performance Indicator 4b:** Conduct research on May 2023 bond election facilities improvement trends. Document projects stakeholders supported and those they did not support.

**Implementation Measure 4b:** Start bond research in July 2023 conducted by an independent 3rd party. Present findings to the school board at the August 29, 2023, work session.

**Performance Indicator 4c:** Based on polling data and guidance from the school board, create a facilities improvement action plan for next steps.

**Implementation Measure 4c:** Present next step outlines and a draft of the facilities improvement action plan to the school board at the October 19, 2023, meeting.



# 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](http://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.*