



District Strategic Plan ● 2021-2025

Gervais School District #1 August 2024





Dear Gervais School District Community Members,

In May 2024, the district experienced a significant breakthrough in achieving Goal #4 of the Strategic Plan through the passage of the general obligation bond. For the first time in more than 30 years, voters approved (72% voting in favor) a more than \$28 million bond to make major investments in their school district's facilities. When more than 20 staff members got together in June to review all of the goals, it was exciting to see the hope, enthusiasm, and determination displayed by these stakeholders and their commitment to continue to move the district forward.

Before I go any further into the plans for the coming year, I want to acknowledge a friend and mentor, Jerry Colonna, a retired administrator who worked tirelessly to help districts across the state move their organizations forward to provide the best opportunities for students. Jerry began working with staff in the district during the 2020 school year and over the course of the last four years, with his guidance, the district created meaningful strategic plans that resulted in focused efforts and accelerated student achievement. He possessed a quiet and steady leadership, compassion, and the ability to ask hard questions. Jerry passed away in May after a brief battle with cancer and his presence was sorely missed at the June meeting.

The strategic plan started out as a three-year playbook, but after meeting in June, the committee decided there was still important work to complete within the first three goals and with the passage of the bond, it was appropriate to revise Goal #4. The most powerful component of the plan is the level of accountability including assigning specific names to tasks and dates to report to the school board.

During Inservice 2024, members of the committee will be sharing with their peers the positive progress made last year on the goals, and how to use those strengths to continue to improve student achievement. That presentation will be available on the district website.

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, staff again received extensive professional development opportunities including curriculum, assessment systems, and instructional strategies. Over the last four years, the district has invested more than \$1.4 million in these areas, which would not be possible without the Student Investment Account Grant. While districts around Gervais experienced shortfalls in their general fund resulting in layoffs and reductions in programs, the district's proactive budgeting approach, including seeking grants to offset inadequate state funding, not only provided the district with stability but has allowed for expansion of programs and offerings.

The most significant learning shift occurred in Spring 2024. For several years, the district focused on student growth. Coming out of the pandemic, this was necessary. However, in March we began conversations with parents and students which included "it's not enough to make growth, you must be on grade level" and with those conversations, we also adjusted expectations for learning which included intensive remediation, before and after school required tutoring and the requirement for students to attend summer school. The district also made an innovative adjustment to summer school which resulted in a six-week program, saw incredible attendance and significant improvements in learning. This was a difficult shift and a new conversation with parents. Moving forward into the 2024-25 school year, this will be a major initiative and will drive all our efforts.

Thank you for your amazing support in the last year and we are working hard to continue to be a source of pride for our community.

Sincerely,
Dandy Stevens
Superintendent

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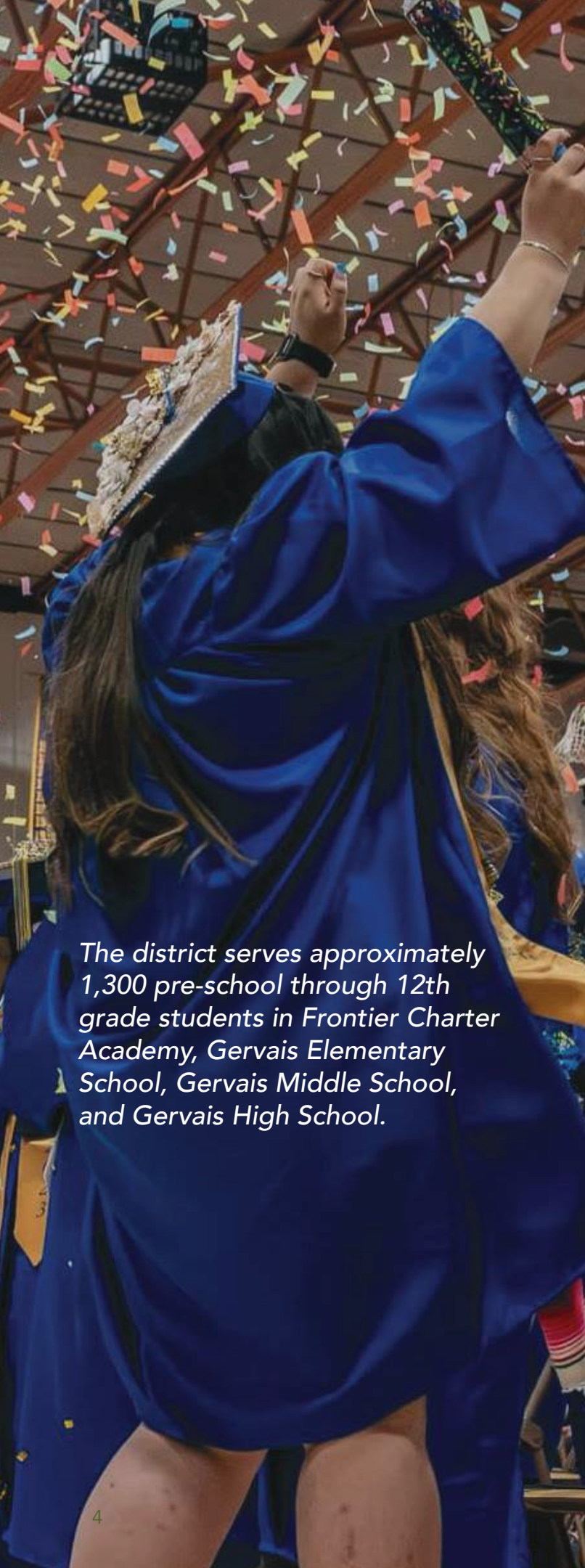
Presented by Community Volunteers, GSD Staff, and Colonna Education Consulting Services

Year Two, Three and Four Work Groups

Angelica Albee, *Middle School Instructional Assistant*
Andrew Aman, *High School Assistant Principal and Principal*
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*
Will Fenner, *Middle School Teacher*
Grant Funderburg, *High School Teacher*
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*
Doug Loiler, *High School Assistant Principal/Athletic Director*
Lisa Ludwikoski, *Elementary School Teacher*
Bob Martin, *Middle School Principal*
Tami Pfizer, *High School Instructional Assistant*
Dusty Price, *Elementary School Principal*
Julie Schnell, *Elementary School Counselor*
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*
Kim Vela, *Middle School Science Teacher*
Jill Woodard, *School Psychologist*
Jesse Zabala, *Middle School Teacher*
Laura Zurita, *Middle and High School Counselor*
Members of the District Implementation Work Group

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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*
Kay Gage, *Teacher on Special Assignment*
Sylvia Valentine-Garcia, *Federal Programs Director*
Holly Hamlin, *High School Teacher*
Creighton Helms, *Elementary School Principal*
Lucas Hill, *Middle School Teacher*
Lisa Ludwikoski, *Elementary School Teacher*
Bob Martin, *Middle School Principal*
Dandy Stevens, *Superintendent*
Ken Stott, *High School Principal*
Jill Woodard, *School Psychologist*



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.

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. 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. 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 13 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 Four, 2024-25, 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 Sarah Bradley.

Performance Indicator 1a: Support all stakeholders in the implementation of a new Social Emotional Learning curriculum, based on survey data received during the 2023-2024 and throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

Implementation Measure 1a: Create a new scope & sequence document and continuous professional development plan by September 30, 2024, and report progress on the action plan to the board at their November 2024 meeting.

Performance Indicator 1b: Assess the perception of 'Belongingness' among district students, staff, and community members, and implement initiatives to specifically address the results at the individual, school, and whole-district levels.

Implementation Measure 1b: Leverage available data tools (DESSA, YouthTruth, HealthyTeen, School Belongingness Survey, local surveys, etc.) to create strategies and suggestions for different stakeholders to engage with, and report progress on this plan and implementation to the board at their January and May 2025 meetings.

Performance Indicator 1c: Prioritize efficacy in the referral, staffing, and 360-degree communication process of the Behavior Support Team (BST) so all members of an individual student's support network are empowered to assist students in their social-emotional-behavioral journey.

Implementation Measure 1c: By September 30, 2024, create a calendar for (a) school mental health support team members to regularly meet with teaching teams, for (b) administrators to build social-emotional "check-ins" during every Early Release Wednesday staff meeting, and (c) modify the behavior referral procedures to include mandatory two-way communications throughout the process. Report progress on this plan to the board at their January and May 2025 meeting.

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: Educate students, staff, and families about the rich history and diverse culture of Gervais to help build a stronger sense of community.

Implementation Measure 2a: Each building will incorporate the shared vision "We are Gervais!" in a beginning-of-year school assembly and the GSD Equity Team will then produce 4 student videos (November, January, March, May) to share diverse family stories and culture. Videos will be published through email, social media platforms and district websites.

Year Four, 2024-25, Performance Indicators and Metrics for Gervais School District's Strategic Plan

continued

Goal 2: *continued*

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

Implementation Indicator 2b: The GSD Equity Team will train staff during inservice week (August) to use the GSD Equity Lens and will then facilitate its use in 3 different decision-making teams in each building by November 1, 2024, February 7, 2025 and May 2, 2025.

Performance Indicator 3c: The GSD Welcome Center will help new students and families to communicate their story, interests, and needs with school staff.

Implementation Indicator 3c: The Welcome Center will implement a new intake interview process (August) that helps students and families share important information about them with building staff. Review this new intake process with involved district and building staff and make any adjustments as needed (October 2024, January 2025, and May 2025).

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 Elizabeth Flores.

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 3, 2025.

- Publish preschool scope & sequence
- Update science and SEL scope & sequence for new curriculum adoption

Performance Indicator 3b: Implement grade-aligned RACES (Restate, Answer, Cite, Explain, Summarize) as an instructional strategy to 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: Publish grade-aligned exemplars at elementary, middle, and high school levels by November 1, 2024 and select student exemplars by June 2, 2025.

- Elementary: Restate, Answer, Cite, Explain - (RACE)
- Middle: RACES (RACE + Sum Up)
- High: RACES + APA/MLA

Year Four, 2024-25, Performance Indicators and Metrics for Gervais School District's Strategic Plan

continued

Goal 3: *continued*

Performance Indicator 3c: Utilize 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 and accelerate learning to achieve grade level standards.

Implementation Measure 3c: Implement iReady/ALEKS for 30 minutes each week in reading (K-8) and math (K-12) by October 1, 2024. Present findings to the school board at their August 2025 meeting.

Performance Indicator 4d: Licensed staff and Administrators will focus on The Danielson Framework for Teaching and Learning Domain 3 specifically Student Engagement to develop instructional strategies which result in performance ratings of proficient or distinguished.

Implementation Measure 4d: Continue professional development and training for staff and administrators on the rubrics for Student Engagement found in the Framework. Administrators will analyze 2023-24 data from the evaluation system based on teacher self-evaluation and final evaluations and compare same data points during the 2024-25 school year to measure change. Results will be shared with the school board by their July 2025 meeting.

Goal 4:

With the passage of the \$28.13 million general obligation bond and the \$6 million OSCIM grant, the district will begin pre-construction planning and contracting in order to complete all promised projects by June 2027. Individuals responsible are Dandy Stevens and board members.

Performance Indicator 4a: The district will solicit requests for project managers and architects in order to begin pre-construction planning.

Implementation Measure 4a: By July 2024 project managers will be selected for board approval and an architect firm will be selected for board approval at their October board meeting.

Performance Indicator 4b: The district will solicit and select community members for the Bond Advisory Council (BAC) and establish meeting dates, a charter and bylaws for the council.

Implementation Measure 4b: The BAC members will be published after the August 2024 regular board meeting and the first meeting will be by September 11, 2024. The school board will receive updates at the next regular board meeting after each BAC meeting.

Performance Indicator 4c: The district will continue to build upon the positive and frequent communication to various stakeholders established during the pre-bond and pre-election process.

Implementation Measure 4c: There will be quarterly newsletters, monthly "good news" blasts, extensive use of social media and websites as well as in-person community engagement activities. These will be coordinated by the Superintendent and the WESD communications staff. The board will receive monthly updates on these specific strategies.

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 2024-2025 school year.

- 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 June 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.

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.



Gervais School District

ESTABLISHED 1834

District Strategic Plan

