



YARMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

VISION 2020: Planning for Student Success, 2016-2020



“Empowering Students”

Mid-Year Update
January, 2017

This report will provide you with a status update on the district’s progress toward completing the action strategies and meeting the performance goals identified in Year Two our five-year strategic plan. You are provided with an update such as this two times each year, keeping you apprised of our work and our student performance as we strive to employ our beliefs about learning and effectively and efficiently meet our districtwide goal of empowering all students to create fulfilling lives.

You will recall from the strategic plan that we identified several Action Strategies to be completed in each of the five years of the plan. In 2016-2017, eight action strategies were targeted for completion. In this report, I have identified the current status of each action strategy using the following definitions:

- **Completed:** The work necessary for implementation is finished.
- **On Schedule:** The work necessary for implementation has been planned or is in progress and will be completed as planned.
- **Delayed:** The work necessary for implementation has been delayed beyond the target date. Any item noted as “delayed” will have an explanatory note.

The following section presents evidence to support each rating.

Action Strategy 1: Expand alternative education options for those students who are at risk of dropping out or who struggle to succeed in the traditional school setting.

Status: On schedule

Beginning in September, a committee consisting of guidance, social work, special education, administration, and regular education teachers has reviewed YHS's current programming and developed a two-tiered approach to developing additional options. Tier I consists of short term changes that will be finalized by the end of January, 2017 (for the 2017-2018 school year) and include the creation of "ELO's" (extended learning opportunities) for juniors and seniors (similar to the previous senior project) that provide students with the opportunity to earn elective credit for project-based work that may take place outside school walls. Once this work is finalized, Part II will involve visiting area schools such as Casco Bay HS to learn about other alternative pathways to learning.

Action Strategy 2: Develop a recognition program to honor students for community service.

Status: On Schedule

The High School recognizes students for outstanding community service at various assemblies throughout the year and at the end of the year. Other schools are in conversation as to how to approach this expectation.

Action Strategy 3: Reach out to colleges, universities, and community colleges to develop dual enrollment opportunities for students.

Status: On Schedule

Beginning in September the High School leadership has been considering dual enrollment opportunities at nearby colleges and comparing those opportunities against our student needs. After reaching out to several schools to learn more about their dual enrollment programs, it is the feeling of the High School administration that student needs for advanced coursework are being met through our existing programming, and additional options in this realm are not needed; in fact, additional options may only bring additional pressure on students to extend themselves academically.

Action Strategy 4: Identify opportunities for engaging community members with the schools.

Status: On Schedule

The district administrative team has met with representatives from community organizations to review opportunities for collaboration and engagement. Along with existing partnerships, several new initiatives took place this fall, with a few others scheduled for the spring. As of now, the documented engagements include:

Junior Achievement Program

Local business people teach four or five 1 hour lessons about our community, what defines a city, and how businesses manage their money.

Yarmouth School Garden

Open every Wednesday afternoon during the summer for visitors to view and pick vegetables

Yarmouth Historical Center

Grade Two visits YHC for lessons on Yarmouth history and a tour of the center.

Food Pantry

Ms. Rhodes class walks with the donations to First Parish Church food pantry.

Community Volunteers

- Jean Bissonnette visits second graders to talk about Native Americans each fall
- Erik Street, Director of Public Works, meets with second graders each spring to talk about public works equipment and recycling
- In October firefighters demonstrate their equipment and the speed in which they prepare for a fire for all grade levels and join students for lunch

Annual Grandparents' Day

Always the Friday before Memorial Day Weekend, grandparents are invited to visit YES classrooms and are treated to a brief musical program.

Career Fair

The HMS Career Fair takes place once a year in the spring. Forty-two presenters and one keynote speaker from Yarmouth and the surrounding communities present workshops on different career opportunities to HMS students grades 5-8. Some of the presenters are parents of former and/or current HMS students.

Mentor Program

Our Partners in Education coordinator, Nini Emmons, matches adult community mentors with students in need of adult support/relationship building.

HMS Student Leadership Team

Our Student Leadership Team is comprised of students in grades 5-8. Nini Emmons is the advisor for this group. Students send out annual seasonal & holiday cards to a variety of community members. They're planning a visit to a senior community residence early spring this year.

5th Grade curriculum related community engagement:**Colonial Craft Day**

This event takes place every spring. Seniors visit and participate in the culminating activity for this unit. Our 5th graders have a chance to experience life as colonial students during this engaging day. They dress in the clothing of this time period and tackle the challenges of making candles, wooden toys, and spice racks. They also learned to use a loom and enjoy at a "family style" lunch. Seniors help with these activities.

HMS Parent speakers present in science classes

- Tom Estabrook- environments
- Dennis Hewitt- magnets and motors
- Michael Schlax - electric engines and magnets

6th Grade curriculum related community engagement:

- Jim Blood-presented on Japanese culture last spring
- Parent, Tim Carnes, presented on his medical mission to Peru this fall
- Former Yarmouth parents and students present annually about various places they've traveled to around the world at the start of the country research project (the list of presenters changes each year)

7th Grade curriculum related community engagement:

- Annual Blood Drive- our students work with members of the Yarmouth Community and -Portland American Red Cross to set up and work at this blood drive
- Transect Walk and Tidal Studies - Yarmouth Shellfish Warden, Maine Department of Marine -Resources-presentations to science classes
- Yarmouth Shellfish Nursery - our students are continuing to work with the Downeast Institute, -Town Harbor Master, Shellfish Committee, Harbor Front Committee, Army Corp of Engineers, DMR
- Invasive Species Walk - Curriculum work at Royal River Trust
- Vital Signs unit - Town of Yarmouth Police and Fire Rescue, local physicians present to our students
- Porcine Dissection - Local Parent Volunteers of Medical Profession and Windham Butchers join science classes to support this curriculum work
- Invasive Insect Talk -Our students go to the Wells Preserve and Maine Dept of Forestry -
- Maine Biotech Day - BAM and Dr. Moore - Speaker on Infectious Disease and Early Diagnosis
- Discussion of soft shell clams in Yarmouth Flats--Officer Byron (speaker), Yarmouth Harbormaster and Shellfish Warden -
- Talk on current status of soft shell clam and predation with Dr. Beal University of Maine Machias
- Discussion of fungi and decomposers in food webs--Dan Argo - owner ArgoMyco
- Genius Hour - Various Students interacting with various local organizations and parents about their individual projects. To name a few - Maine Med, Hancock Lumber, Olympia Sports, University of New England
- Celebrate the Royal River Day - Art Bell - Fish Migration Day and Maine Fisheries
- Speaker Graham Haynes -presented to Social Studies classes about acupuncture

- Bayview Invasive Walk - Kyle Warren, Royal River Trust, led students on a walk viewing invasive species in local green spaces in Yarmouth.

8th grade curriculum related community engagement:

- Young Athletes Festival-Social Studies-Kick off to the civil rights unit-HMS 8th graders host this annual event. We work with the Special Olympics to welcome young athletes with special needs to our school. These children, ages two through 8, come from Yarmouth and the surrounding communities. Our eighth grade students support the student athletes for the morning as they explore games and events that will prepare them for the Special Olympics.
- Guest speakers for social studies - Yarmouth community member presents on the holocaust.
- Grade level participation in Coastal Cleanup field trip (worldwide organizational effort).
- **5/8 Buddy Community Outreach Activity:**
This December the 5/8 buddies began a community outreach effort through a pen pal initiative with the residents of Bay Square, Brentwood, Bartlett Circle and a group of seniors who meet at the Historical Society several times a week. The goal of this outreach is to build relationships with these community members with the hope of visiting back and forth between the students and the residents (we have not had any visits yet).

Our students want to learn about what middle school was like when these community members were their age. We'll invite the community members to HMS to see student performances, student projects and presentations so they can become familiar with what schools are like for our students now. Our students have written one round of letters to these residents. We'll continue writing monthly when the 5th/8th grade buddies get together.

- **5/8 Grade Buddy Gift of Self Activity:**
Fifth and eighth grade students volunteer two or more hours of their time every December and/or January, to assist others in some way. This volunteer work can include activities like shoveling driveways, reading to younger students, dog walking for neighbors, cooking a meal, writing letters or cards, visits to retirement homes, volunteering at soup kitchens, volunteering at animal shelters, refereeing games with younger children, ETC. The buddies can do this volunteer work together or separately (this also supports our 8th grade students to think about ideas for their upcoming community service requirement at YHS).
The 5th/8th grade buddies write a reflection about their experiences volunteering, what they did and how it felt to give their time in service of others. The buddies share these reflections with each other.

World Languages Classes-curriculum related community engagement:

- Community members/parents who have visited or lived in French or Spanish speaking countries present to HMS students
- Students Skype/Facetime with current or former Yarmouth HS students living abroad
- Yarmouth Resident, Charlie Roscoe, founder of the Schools for Refugee foundation, presents to our students on his recent trips to Africa. Our students have an on-going relationship with the students of our sister school in St. Bahkita, Uganda.

YHS Policy Presentations

Parents and community members participate as an audience to our junior public policy presentations, offering feedback.

Community members with policy/law/legislative experience are invited to work with students on their policy recommendations for their public policy projects. This is an opportunity for students to talk about their topic and workshop their recommendation before giving their final presentation.

YHS Sewing for Others

Since Sewing for Others began, we have had community members (people who sew, a woman that runs a business selling her sewn bags, and a representative from the Linus Project) visit with us to share their expertise and sewing skills. Bringing in volunteers is something we will continue to do when we can.

YHS CEP 3 Day job shadow

Students job shadow a member of the community (often within a 20 mile radius of Yarmouth, and sometimes beyond) at their place of business.

In addition to parents being invited to CEP presentations, invitations are also extended to CEP site supervisors. The CEP presentations take place the week after the job shadow experience and are located at YHS.

Town Recycling Committee

YHS Green Voices Student sits in on the once-a-month town recycling committee meeting.

Global health volunteerism

YHS students who are part of Global Action volunteer once a month at Partners for World Health, a Maine-based organization that recycles medical supplies to improve global health.

Clam Fest

Food Booths, helping the Chamber of Commerce, composting table, etc.

Community Book Discussion

Juniors choose from a list of books to read. Students organize discussion agendas. Members of the community join the small groups to discuss the book.

Power of One Project

YHS students will be creating projects, activities, and donations around Yarmouth and beyond. This can be in the form of community events, donations and volunteering at community organizations, and so on.

Op-Doc Project

YHS students will create mini documentary videos relating to a subject of their choosing. This may or may not involve community members or community activities depending on their topics. For CP students especially, they will be encouraged to interview community members as part of their videos.

Artist Residencies

YHS students work with a professional artist within the classroom. In 2015 George Mason worked with AP students for a month. In November 2016 Tim Christensen worked with all of Holly Houston's art classes for two weeks. Louise Bourne will be working with AP students in February and March 2017. Adriene Herman will be working with Art Fundamentals students in April and May 2017.

Clayton's Art Show

Students prepare and hang work in the gallery space at Clayton's.

Yarmouth Community Chorus

The chorus presented several songs to the students and staff at the YHS school-wide assembly in December.

Action Strategy 5: Increase funding for professional development opportunities, with identified priority areas clearly articulated.

Status: Delayed

The first two words in this action strategy provide enough explanation for the delay. Quite simply, we are making every attempt to maintain our current programming without causing increases to the budget. This strategy will remain on the books for future years.

Action Strategy 6: Examine opportunities to provide transportation and facilities maintenance through regional collaboration and/or private contract.

Status: On Schedule

On January 26, you will participate in a workshop session where you will be presented with data from our current services, as well as responses to our RFP (Request for Proposals) for contracted services. We have met with vendors, other school districts, and our employees to gather as much pertinent data as possible. You will be asked to make a decision on this strategy in February.

Action Strategy 7: Implement peer mentoring programs that are meaningful, focused on improvement of instruction, and consistent across the district.

Status: On Schedule

NTY (New to Yarmouth) is a program provided for new employees throughout the district, kicking off with a multi-day experience in the summer and continuing with monthly experiences throughout the first school year. NTY provides employees with the nuts and bolts introduction in the fall, leading to more organic discussions throughout the year with a focus on curriculum and instruction as well as the organizational and cultural expectations of our staff.

In addition to NTY programming, which is largely implemented by administrators, veteran instructional staff across the district are identified to work with new staff members. Typically, more than one veteran works closely with each new member, providing feedback on curriculum, instruction, classroom management, and cultural/organizational topics.

This year, we have created an employee handbook as a reference for many of the organizational concerns expressed by new staff, allowing peer mentoring discussion to focus more on curriculum and instruction. We have also added Learning Walks for teachers, in which groups of teachers observe and discuss lessons provided by others, thereby increasing our conversations around instruction across grade levels and disciplines.

Action Strategy 8: Research the costs and benefits of providing foreign language instruction in elementary school and, if appropriate, develop a plan for implementation.

Status: On Schedule

The World Languages staff has been meeting for over a year now, as part of the cyclical curriculum review process. As part of that review, they have been tasked with researching the benefits of a K-12 world language program. They have also visited other districts with successful elementary foreign language programs. A report is due from this committee next fall.