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Second Reading; January 20, 2015

Oxford Hills School District

Harrison, Hebron, Norway, Otisfield,
Oxford, Paris, Waterford, West Paris

Building a Bridge to the Future: *Elevating the Performance and Effectiveness of Our Schools*

A Strategic Plan

2015–2020

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Crafting a Mission and Core Beliefs

An important aspect of the process of strategic planning was the crafting of a Mission Statement, as well as Core Beliefs. What follows is the result of the work of the Strategic Planning Team and the feedback of staff and citizens from across the eight communities that comprise the Oxford Hills School District. Going forward the Board of Directors will act to codify the Mission and the Core Beliefs as formal Board policy.

Our Mission

The Oxford Hills School District, in partnership with parents and communities, engages and supports all students in diverse and challenging learning opportunities to prepare them to graduate as healthy, responsible, and productive citizens, ready to succeed in our global societies.

Core Beliefs

Therefore, the Oxford Hills School District, in collaboration with its parents and communities, will:

- Meet students where they are, motivating and helping them develop their individual learning paths.
- Hold students to high expectations and provide adequate time and support to achieve them.
- Prepare students for success by helping them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Foster high aspirations and the skills of self-determination, self-control, and self-advocacy.
- Guide students to be curious learners and ethical leaders, able to adapt to changing times.

These learning experiences will occur in a safe, caring, and welcoming environment.

Guiding a Course of Action, Establishing Priorities In Challenging Times

The last several years have been challenging for public schools. Across America and here in Maine, the depth and duration of the Great Recession still haunts us as government, businesses, schools, and individuals move, ever so slowly, to recovery and a brighter future. The Oxford Hills School District has shown its own grit in responding to the economic downturn, working hard to preserve core programming for students, while balancing the local impact on taxpayers.

Today, we need to plan forward in a bold way, to take the quality of learning opportunities for students to a new level, enhancing effectiveness in all that the district does, from instructional practice, to curriculum design, to higher expectations for learning, to reporting on important measures of progress. We must ensure efficiency of operations, from transportation to the adequacy and maintenance of facilities. We must make a comprehensive effort to better engage the broad public, both in day- to -day school matters and in setting a direction, a course of action for the future.

At the heart of this process to plan strategically for the longer term and set priorities for our public schools is the commitment to ensure that the education provided to all students is contemporary and rigorous. This means that the children welcomed to our public schools as 4- and 5 year-olds will flourish and will acquire a high level of knowledge and skills that will prove to be a strong foundation for the accelerated change and advancements that they will experience as adults in this 21st century. Each and every graduate of Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School must leave highly prepared for a successful life in the pursuit of college, careers, and citizenship.

To these ends, the Oxford Hills School District, through a strategic planning process, has set a course of action, identifying priorities for the next five years, a blueprint to guide district schools towards continuous improvement and high levels of performance and effectiveness. The strategic plan that follows is organized around six **Categories**, each with **Lead Objectives** and **Action Strategies**. Informed by **Recurring Themes from the Public,** the plan represents a critical tool and policy statement for the Board of Directors, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and the public of the Oxford Hills member communities.

> *"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."*— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Strategic Plan Overview

The Oxford Hills Board of Directors embarked on a 15-month strategic planning process in the Spring of 2013 with the creation of a Strategic Planning Team comprised of Board, community, faculty, staff, student, and business members. The Board recognized that in this time of limited resources and increased expectations a strategic plan is necessary. We embarked in an all-encompassing district assessment leaving nothing off the table. All ideas were worthy of consideration. Our work resulted in the creation of a district mission that drives the goals and action plans of our strategic plan. In short, this plan will serve as a blueprint for identifying our goals, determining priorities, and putting into action the approaches and initiatives necessary to accomplish our district goals by 2020. To keep focus on our progress, we developed transparent methods for measuring our progress and practices that keep this plan tied to our daily work and decision points.

Recognizing that our public schools are reflections of the communities they serve, this process started with engaging our public. We first wanted to hear from our community members. Our team engaged feedback through open forums, roundtable discussions, on-line surveys and personal interviews. We reviewed the feedback and identified reoccurring themes that were used to develop this plan. The resulting strategic plan document is designed to guide the Board, administration, and staff in educating the children and youth of Oxford Hills. This plan will lead to enhanced community engagement and strengthened communications with parents, the general public, business, and civic groups.

Jared Cash,
Board of Directors and Chair
Strategic Planning Team

Rick Colpitts,
Superintendent of Schools

Measuring and Reporting Our Effectiveness and Progress

Overview:

Central to strategic planning for any organization and particularly vital to a school district plan are the measures of effectiveness – those key indicators, which, when tracked over time, provide valuable data and evidence of progress. What follows are the **Major Measures and Performance Targets** that will form the progress report as part of the implementation of the five-year strategic plan. The collection and analysis of the data tied to these measures will be shared with the broad school-community so all members of the public can gain an understanding of trends, comparisons, and overall school effectiveness.

By design, the measures entail **an Overarching Goal** along with **Attainment, Achievement, and Behavioral** measures. A targeted level of performance, set to 2019 – the last year of the strategic plan – has been established for each measure and can be compared to the baseline performance, thus providing the opportunity to track progress over time.

Annually, the Superintendent of Schools, through a State of the District Forum, will report progress against the **Performance Targets** for each measure. A Data Dashboard on the District's website will track progress as well, offering graphic displays and data tables that illustrate progress against the measures.

Overarching Goal:

All Oxford Hills graduates will demonstrate the achievement of a high level of knowledge, skills, and habits of work necessary for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

Related Recurring Themes From The Public:

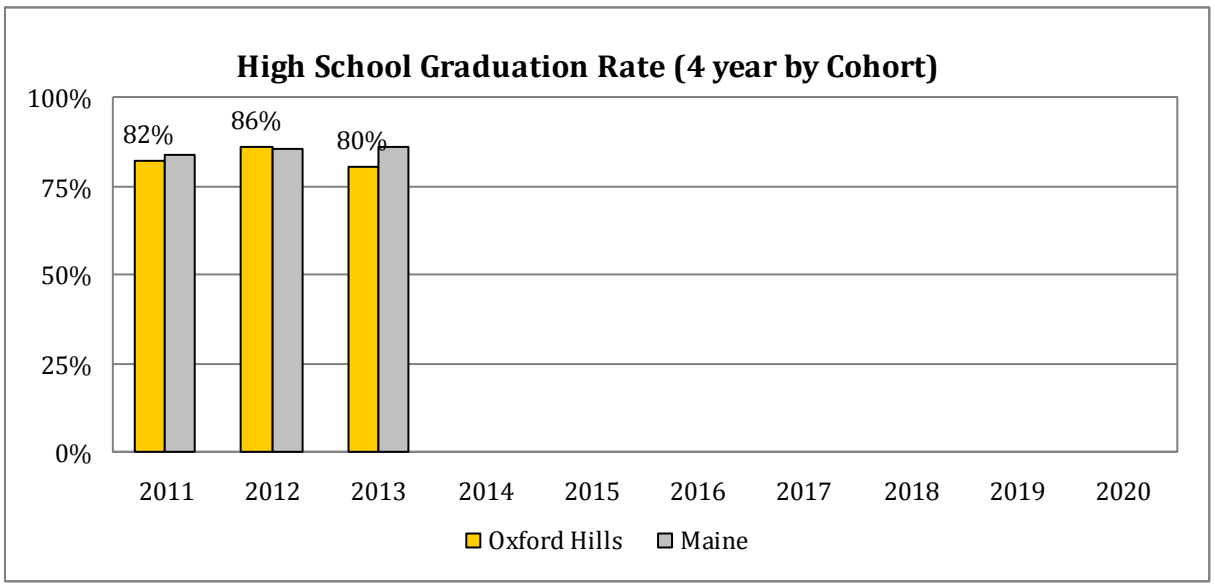
- Measure and report high school graduation, college-going, college completion rates; measure and report on some standardized tests, but play down testing and its importance.
- Measure and report on attendance, sports, and co-curricular activities, and broaden post secondary enrollment to include military and apprenticeships, not just 2-year and 4-year college.

Major Measures and Performance Targets

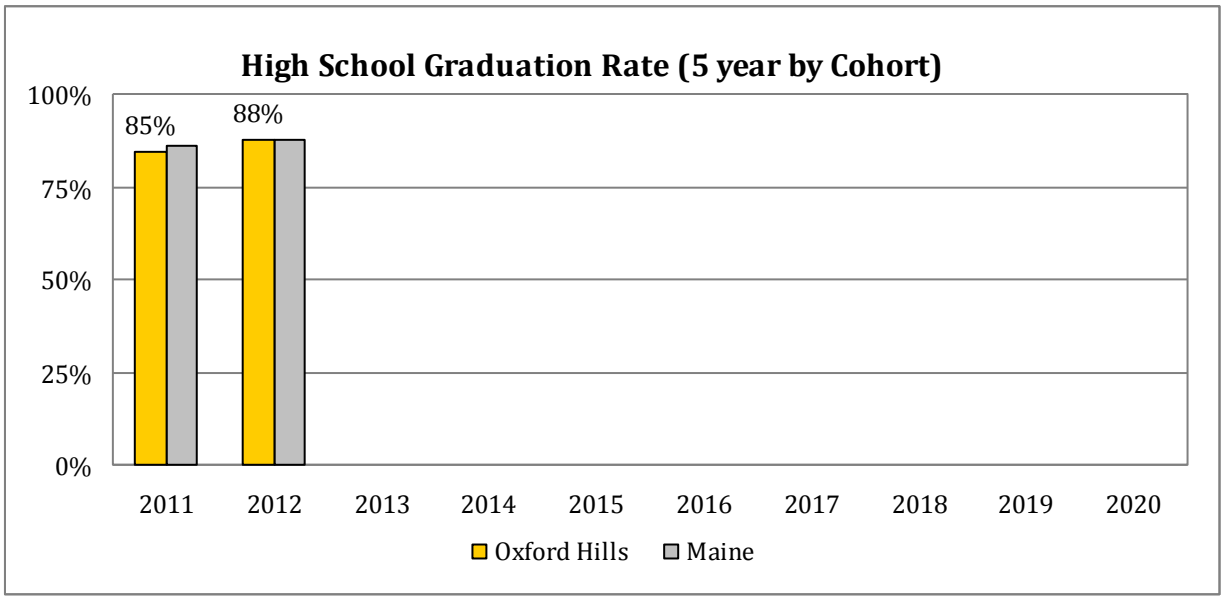
At the end of the 2020 school year:

Attainment Measures

- **90%** of students will graduate from high school.

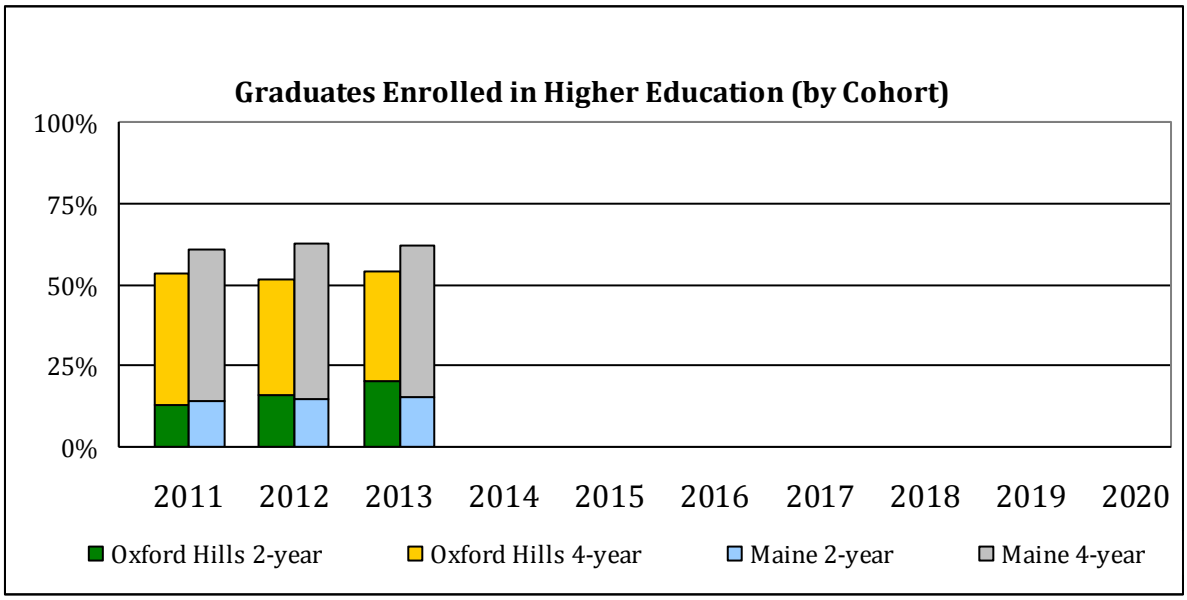


NOTE: As the District and the state of Maine moves to proficiency-based learning and graduation, some students may take longer to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, thus requiring five years to earn a high school diploma.



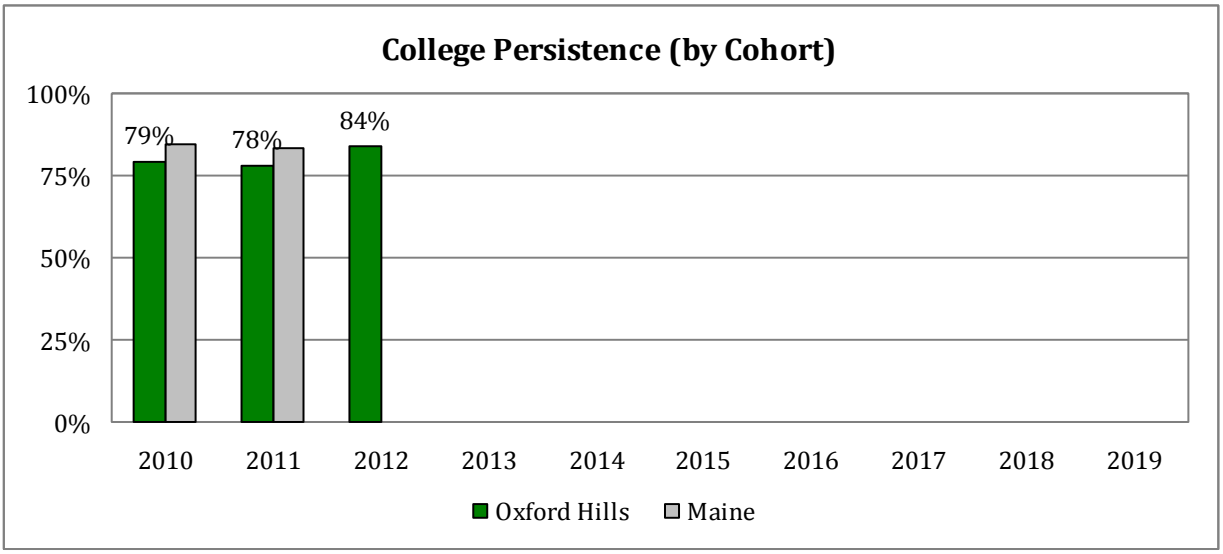
High School Graduation & Dropout Rates. (n.d.). Retrieved September 26, 2014, from http://www.maine.gov/education/gradrates/gradrates.html

- **66%** of students will be enrolled in a two or four year college degree program or a post secondary industry certificate program within one year of high school graduation.



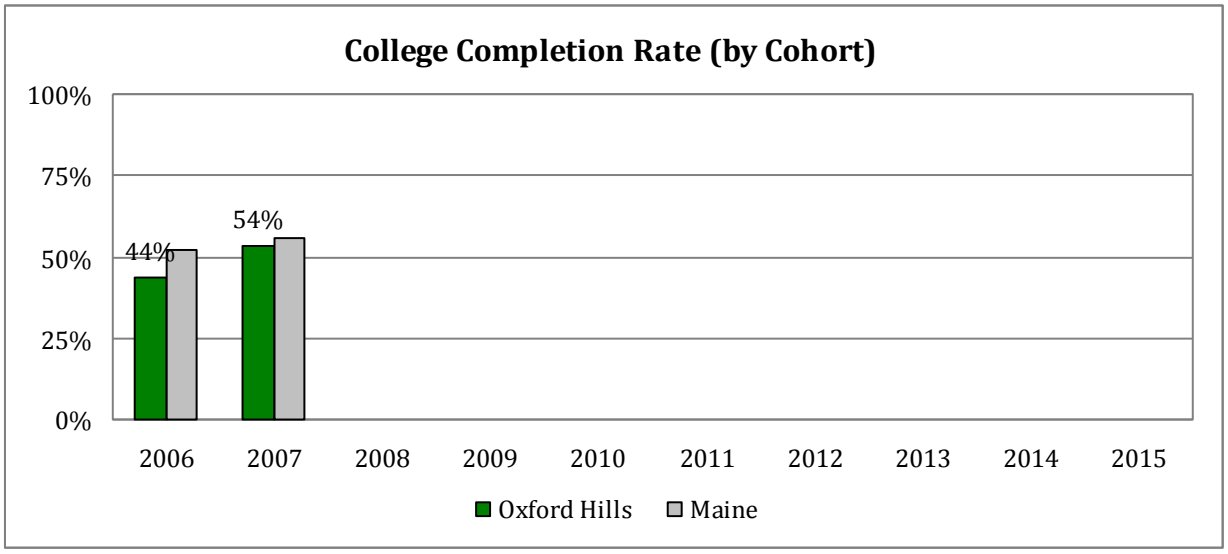
- **88%** of students will remain enrolled in college in their third semester/second year.

NOTE: This measure is an important indicator of college readiness and a good predictor of college completion. Importantly, though, this measure is about *shared* accountability with higher education institutions. The Oxford Hills School District prepares students to pursue post-secondary study and to be successful. Colleges and universities where OHCHS graduates enroll have the responsibility to guide and support further student learning and success.

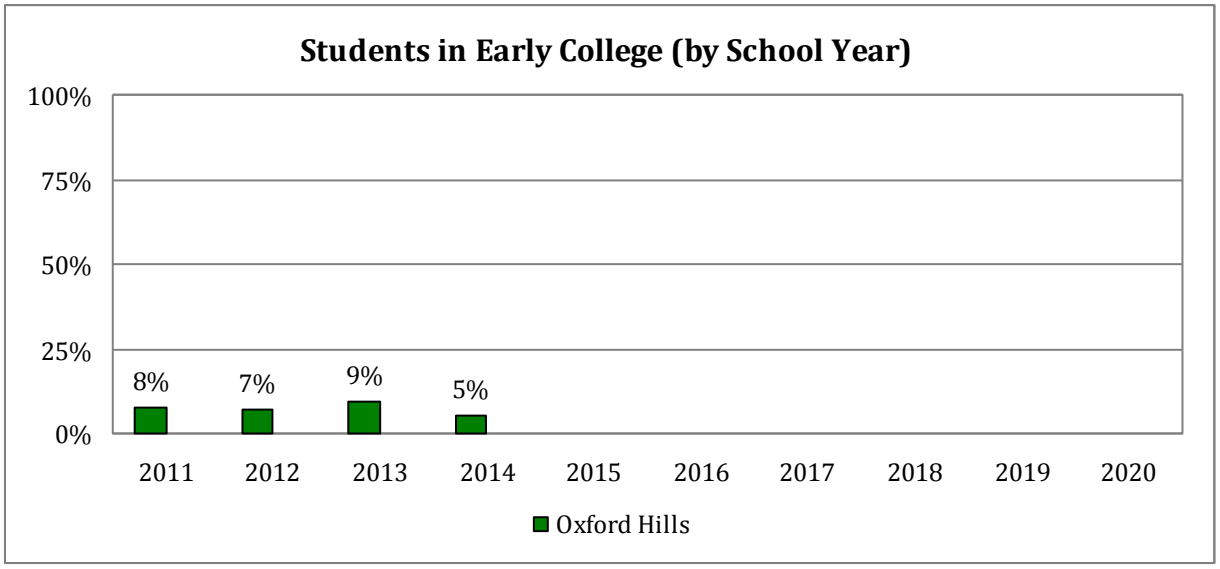


Post secondary data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) & the Maine Department of Education (DOE), and compiled by the Mitchell Institute's *College-Going in Maine: Data Brief* (July 2014).

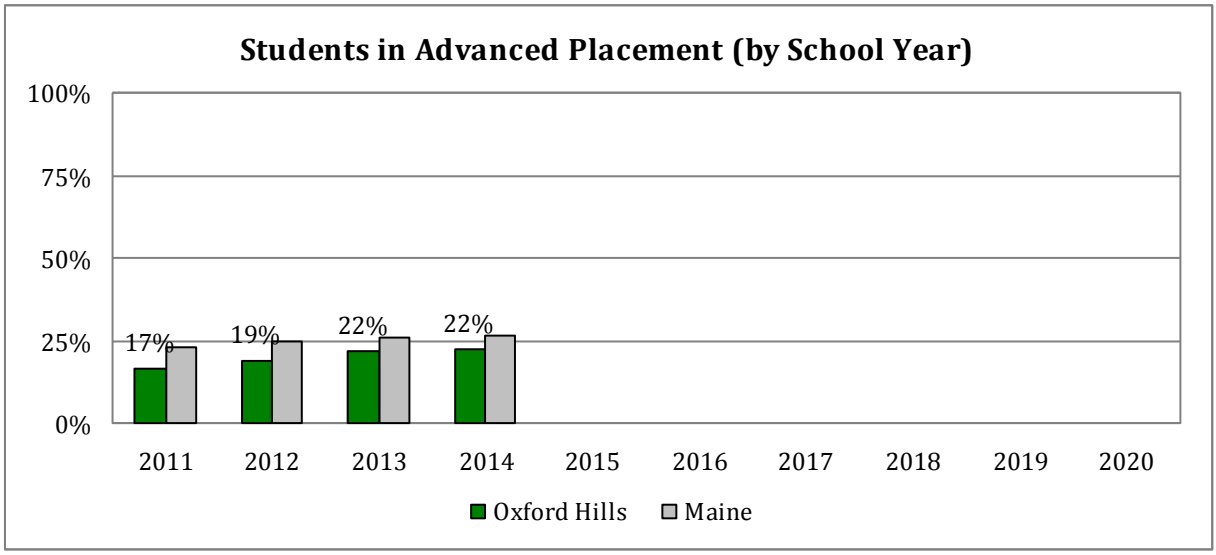
- **The district will monitor** the percentage of students who receive a two or four year college degree within three years (associate) and six years (bachelors) of high school graduation.



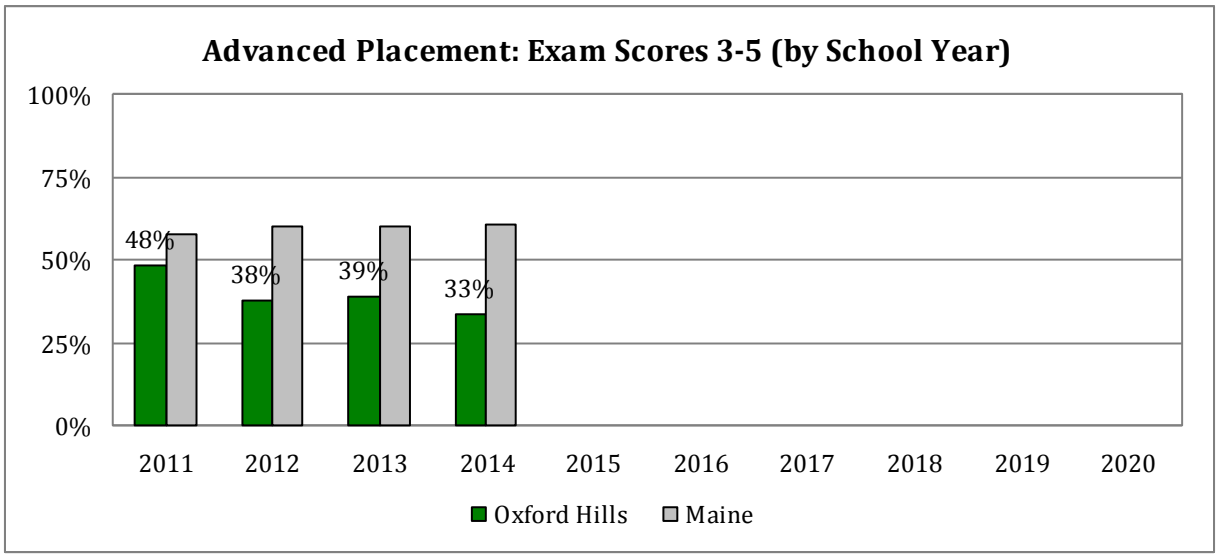
- **25%** of high school junior and senior students will be enrolled in Early College courses.



- **30%** of high school junior and senior students will be enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.



- **69%** of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses score a 3, 4, or 5 on the end of course exam.



Advanced Placement Data From:

- For Maine: http://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data
- For Oxford Hills: https://scores.collegeboard.org/pawra/home.action (login required)

Achievement Measures

SPECIAL NOTE: *As the new Smarter Balanced Assessment system replaces the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and the current SAT, new measures will entail the establishment of new baselines. Similar changes are occurring in other states and school districts nationwide.*

- For school years prior to (and including) FY2014, State provided standardized testing for Maine *high schools* were conducted using Maine High School Assessments (MHSA), which were based on SAT results (but slightly modified for math, plus a science component).
- For school years prior to (but not including) FY2014, the State assessment for middle & elementary schools was the New England Common Assessments Program (NECAP).
- For FY2015 and beyond, Maine will use standardized tests developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in Reading and Math for all tested grade levels.
- For FY2014 at the middle & elementary level, there was no state assessment provided.

In this version of the Strategic plan, prior assessment results are charted for:

- **Grade 11 Maine High School Assessment (MHSA/SAT) in Reading, Math & Writing**

  NOTE: Suspension of the use of the SAT by the State of Maine as the state accountability exam for high school, coupled with the redesign of the SAT itself, will mean that the reporting of SAT performance over the course of the 5-year strategic plan will change.

- **Grade 8 New England Common Assessment (NECAP) in Reading and Math**
- **Grade 4 New England Common Assessment (NECAP) in Reading and Math**

These will be replaced by:

Grade 11: Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) in Reading and Math

- **Performance Target TBD** (3 year average) of high school students will meet or exceed the state standards in Mathematics and Reading on the new Grade 11 Smarter Balance Assessments.

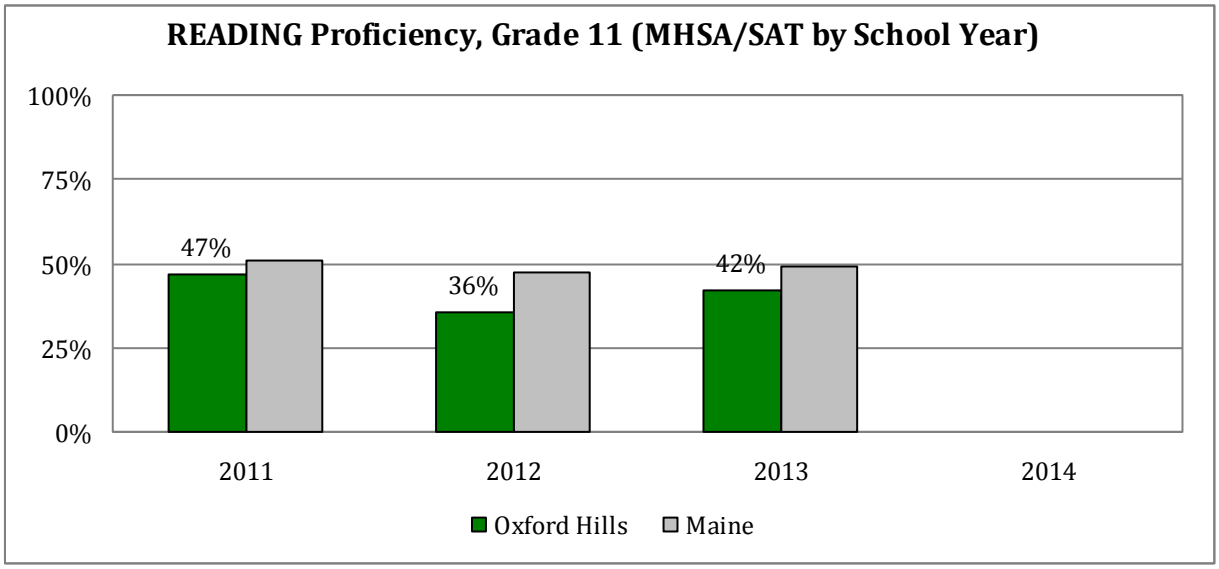
Grade 8: Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) in Reading and Math

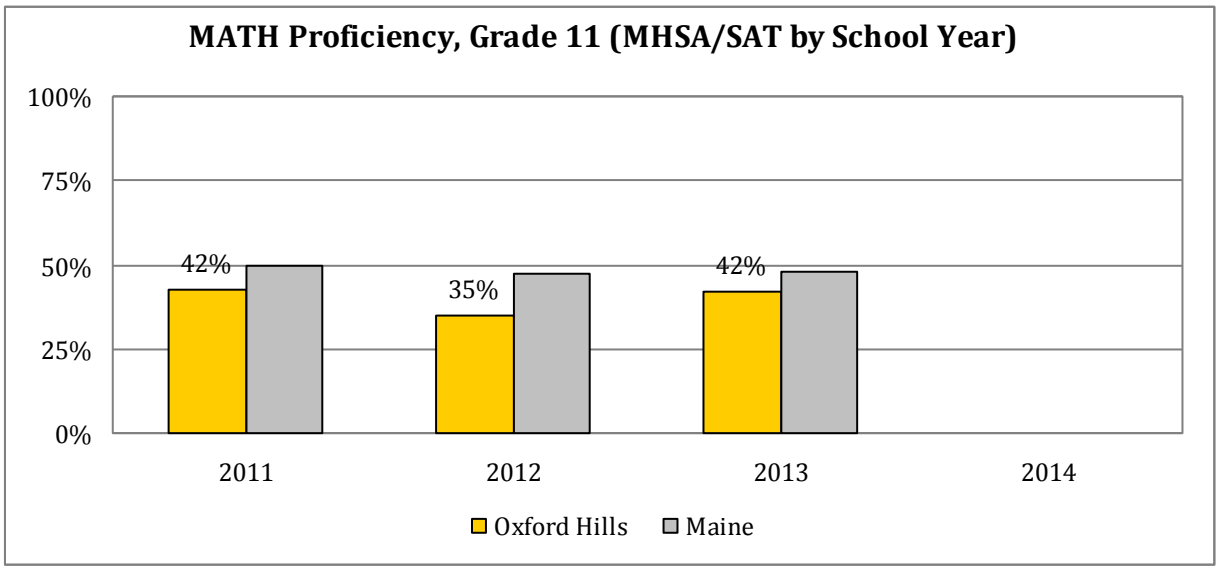
- **Performance Target TBD** (3 year average) of middle school students in Grade 8 will meet or exceed the standards in Reading, and **75%** of middle school students will meet or exceed the standards in Mathematics on the Grade 8 Smarter Balance Assessment.

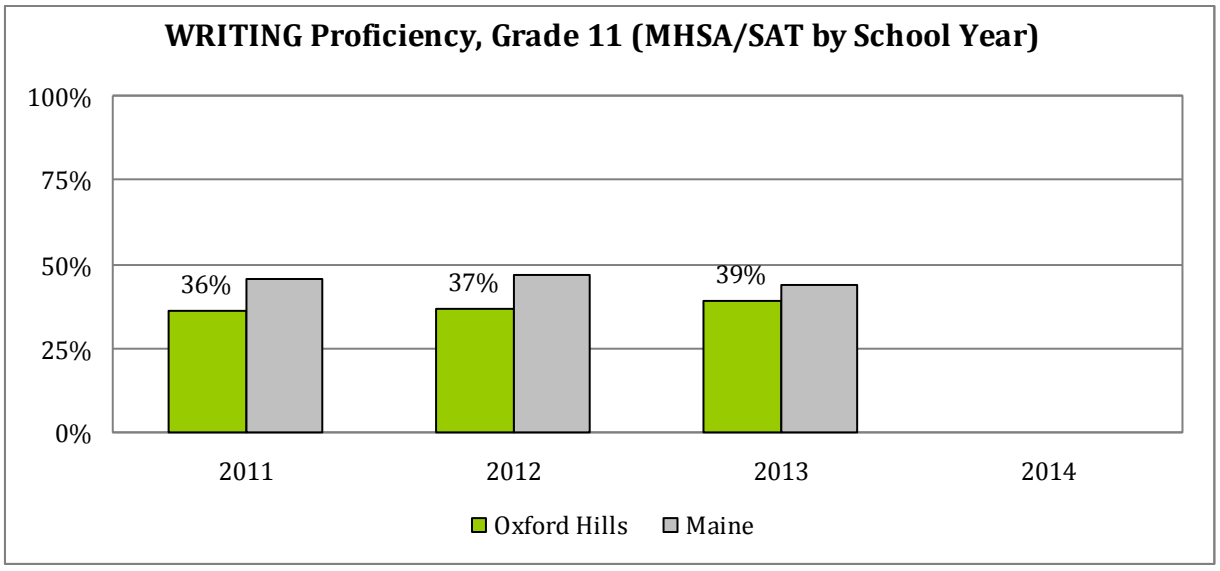
Grade 4: Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) in Reading and Math

- **Performance Target TBD** (3 year average) of Grade 4 students will meet or exceed the standards in Reading, and **75%** of Grade 4 students will meet or exceed the standards in Mathematics on the Smarter Balance Assessment.

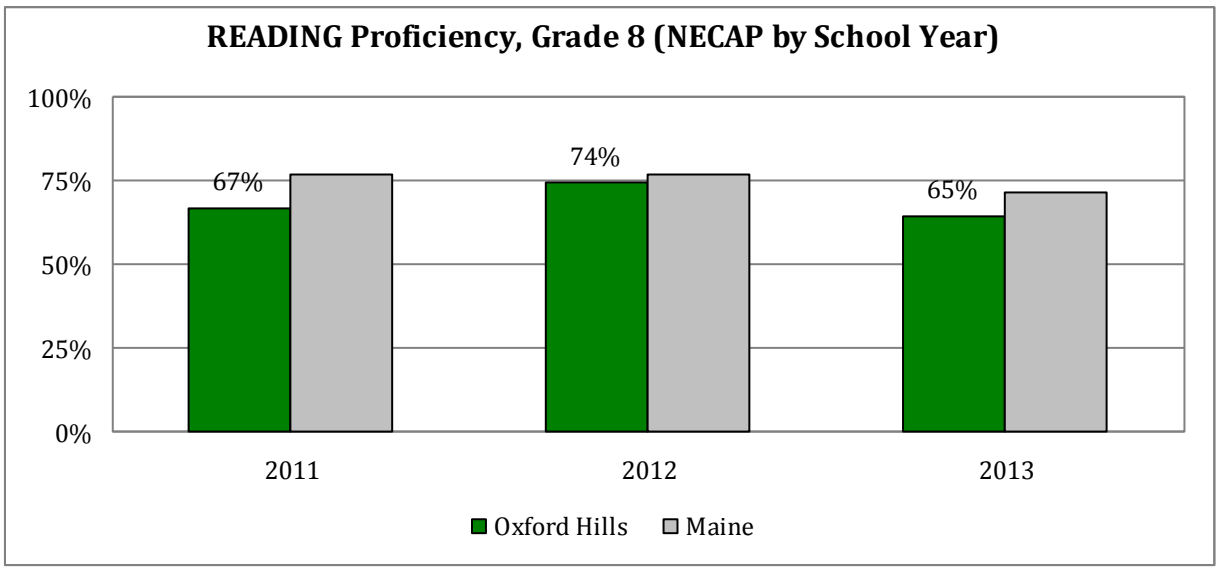
- **Grade 11 Maine High School Assessment (MHSA/SAT) in Reading, Math & Writing**

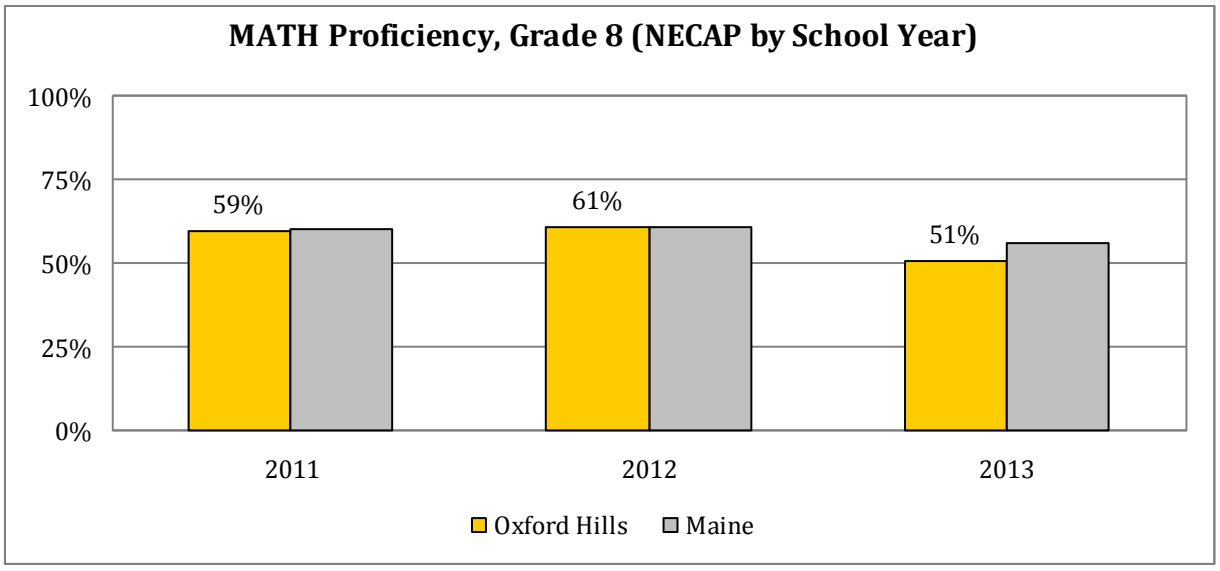




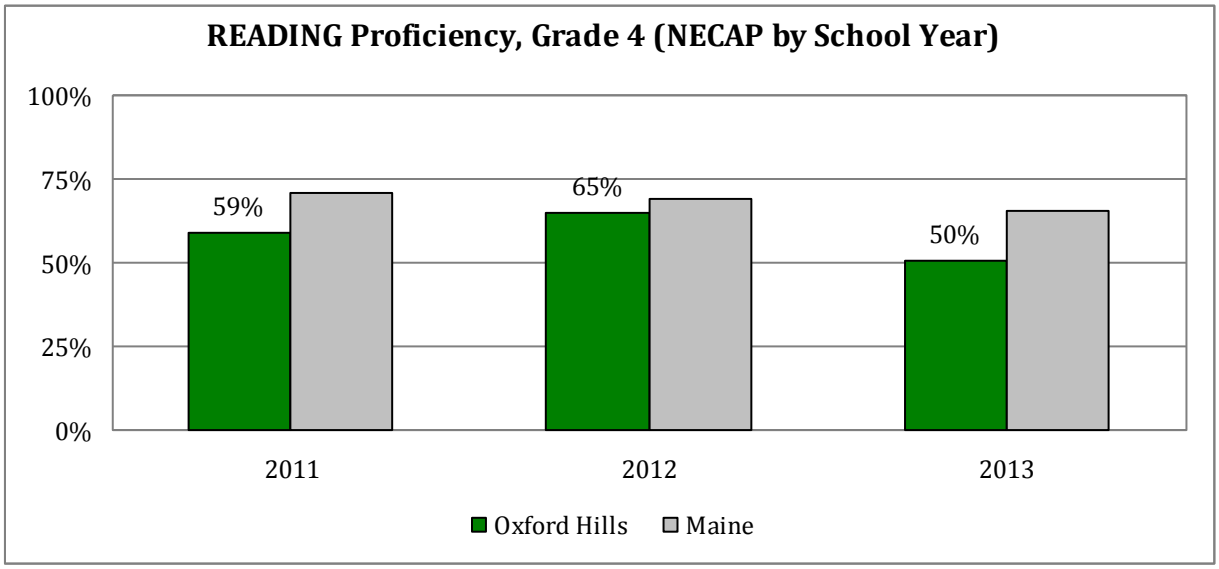


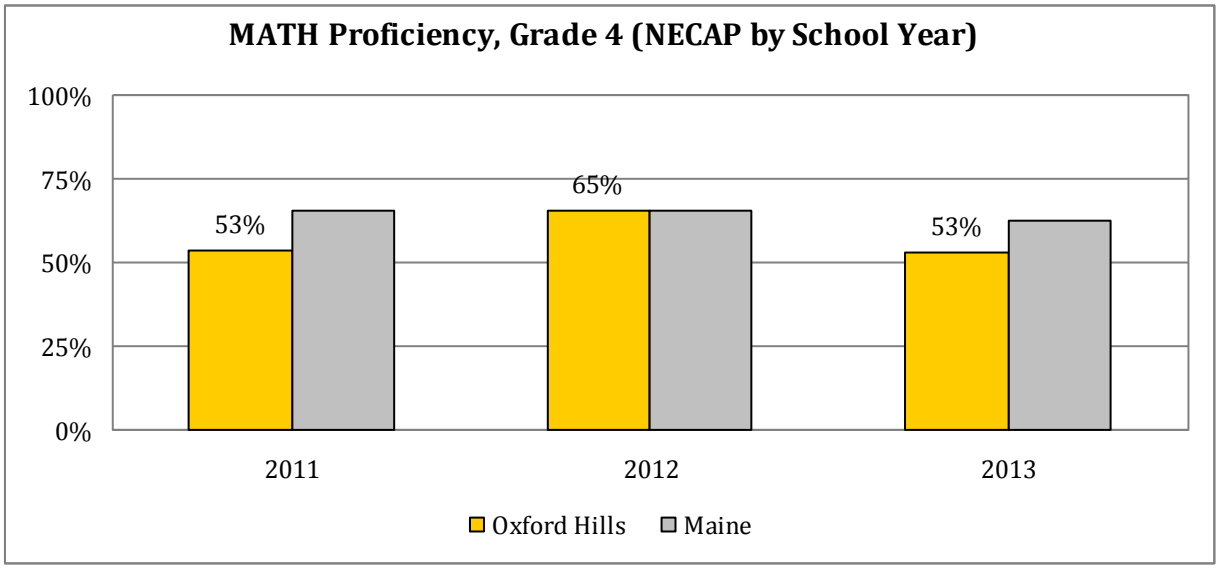
- **Grade 8 New England Common Assessment (NECAP) in Reading and Math**




MATH Proficiency, Grade 8 (NECAP by School Year)
100%
75%
50%
25%
0%
59%
61%
51%
2011
2012
2013
Oxford Hills
Maine

- **Grade 4 New England Common Assessment (NECAP) in Reading and Math**



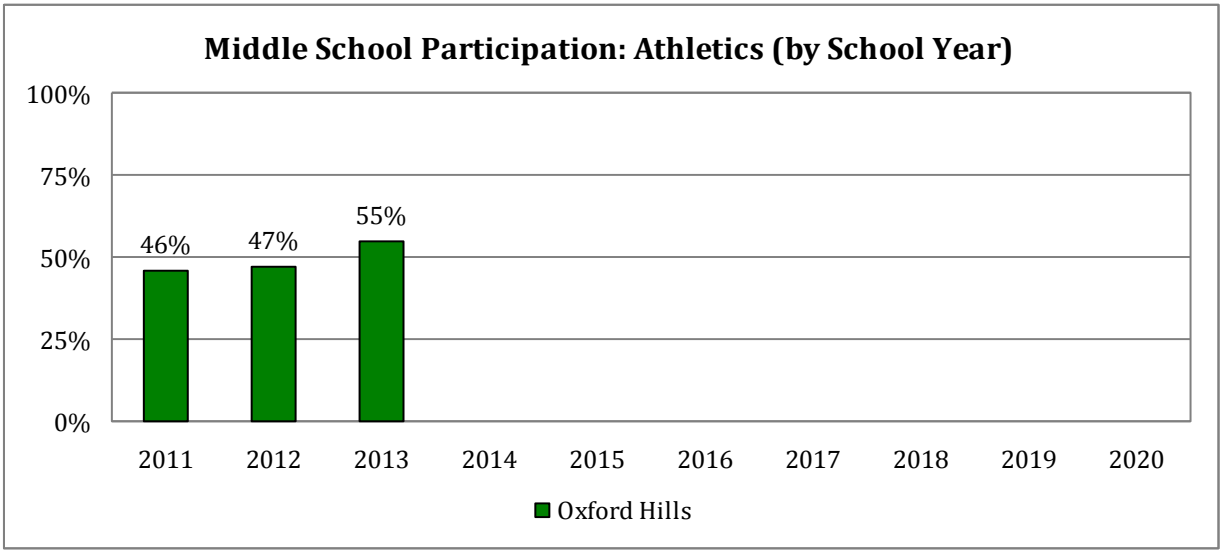


MHSA and NECAP data from:
http://dw.education.maine.gov/DirectoryManager/Web/Maine_report/DTHome.aspx

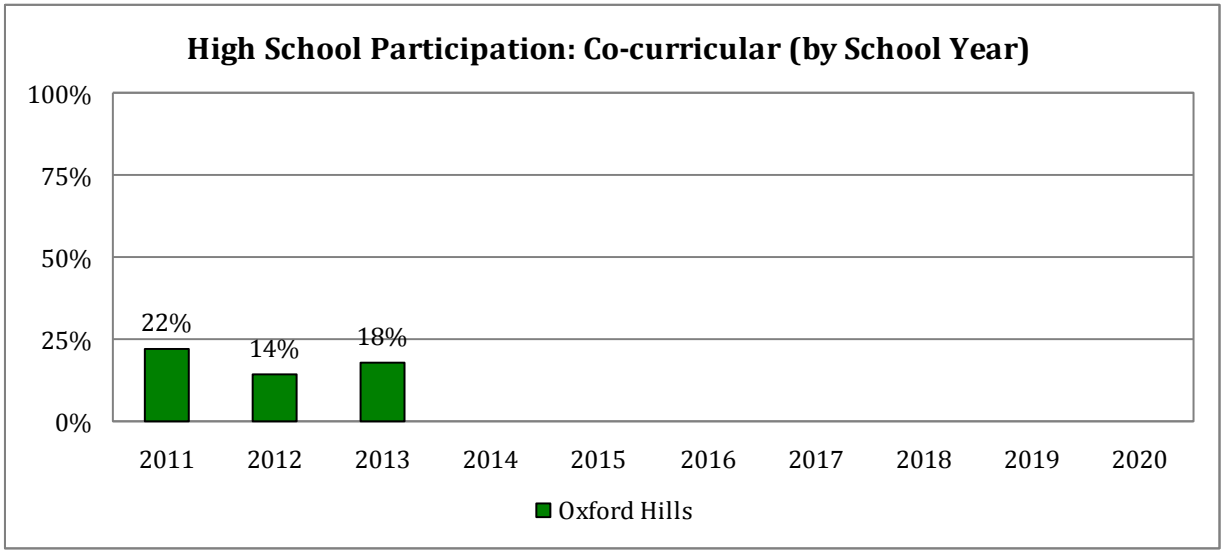
Behavioral Monitors

- **50%** of middle school students will participate in co-curricular programs.

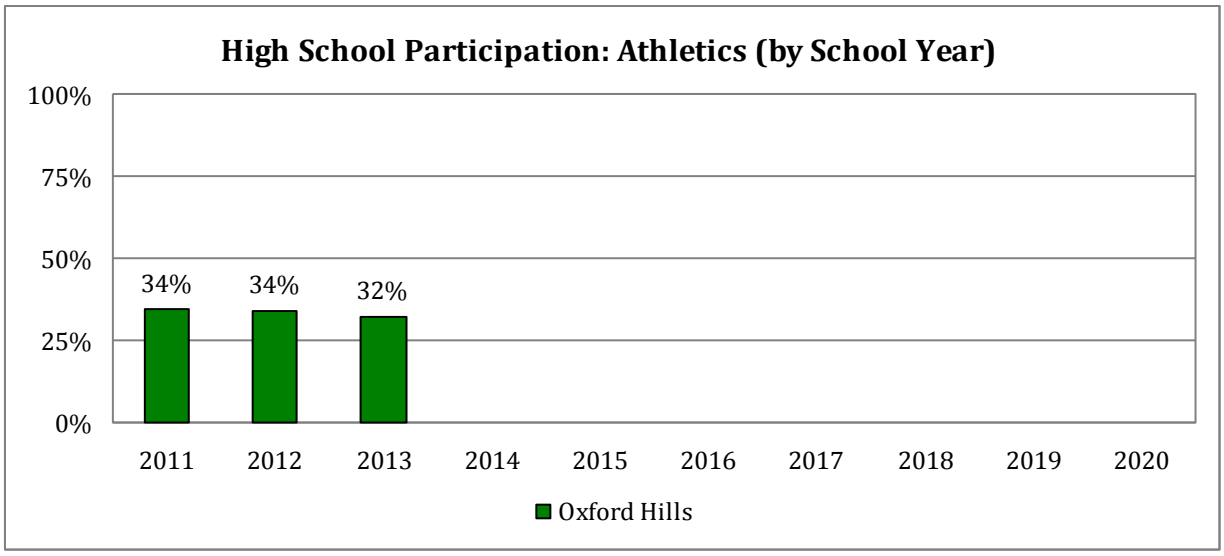
- **55%** of middle school students will participate in athletics programs.



- **20%** of high school students will participate in co-curricular programs.

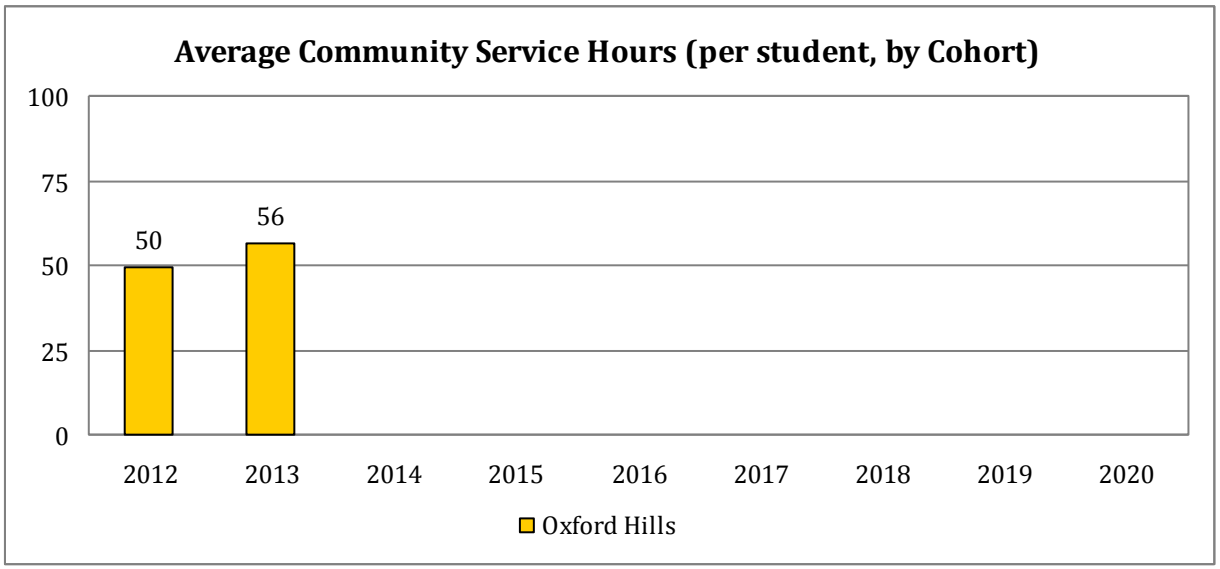


- **40%** of high school students will participate in athletics programs.

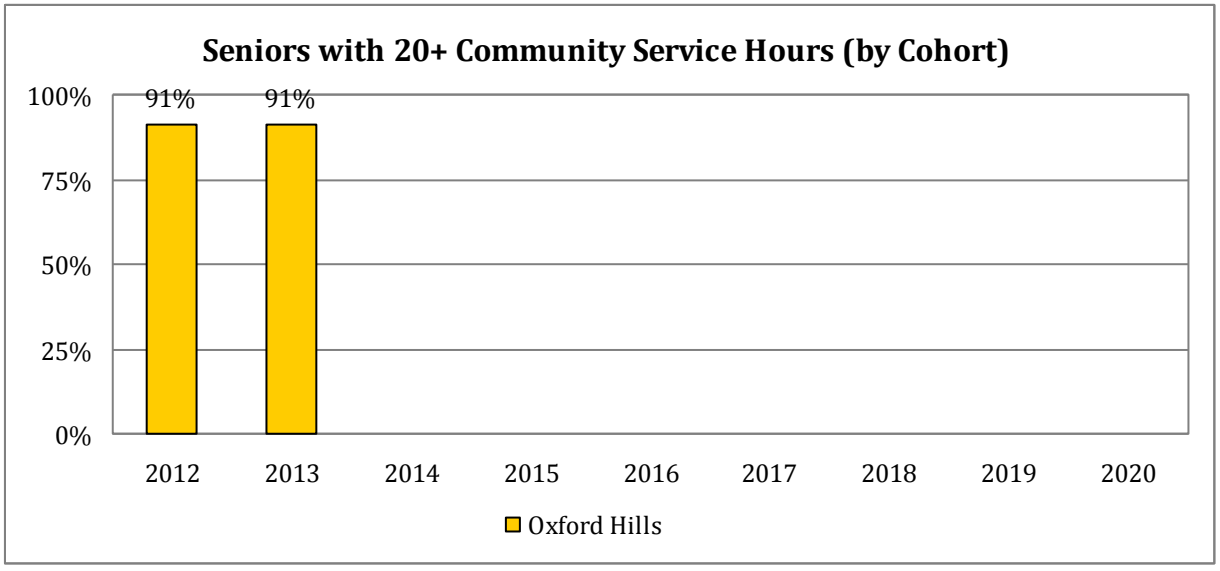


MS & HS Participation data from MSAD17 Infinite Campus database (as tracked for eligibility purposes)

- Oxford Hills High School seniors will perform a minimum of 20 hours of community service during their high school career (currently a graduation requirement)
- **Baseline**: The 257 students in the FY2014 cohort performed 14,520 hours of service @56.4 hours per student; an average that greatly exceeds the graduation requirement.



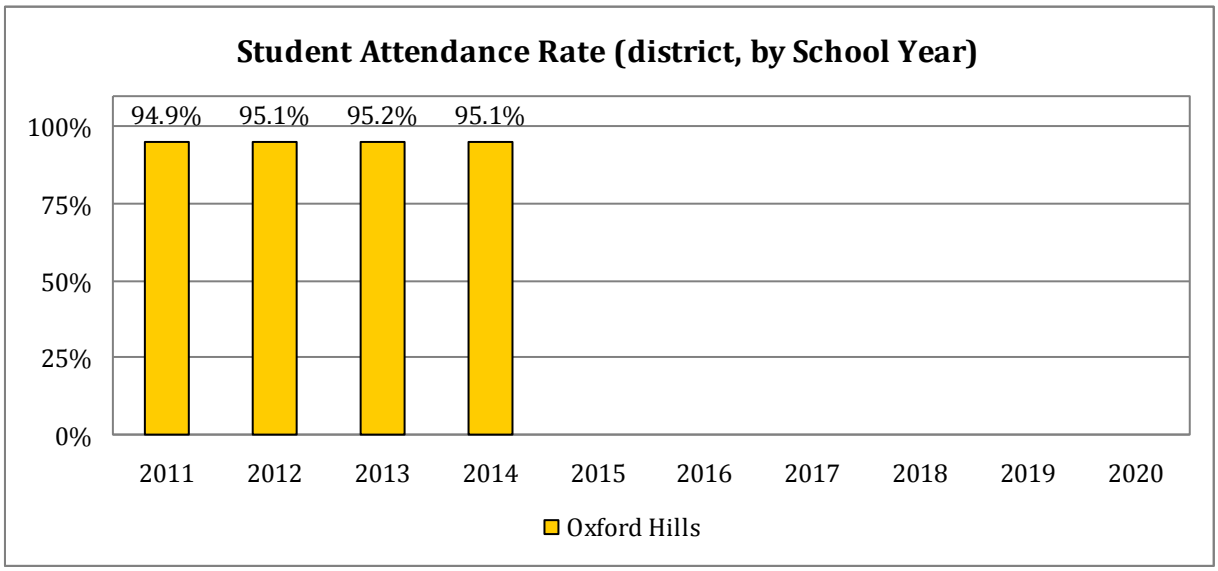
- In each of the 2013 and 2014 cohorts, only 22 students had less than the 20 community service hours required for graduation, meaning 91% of students met that requirement.



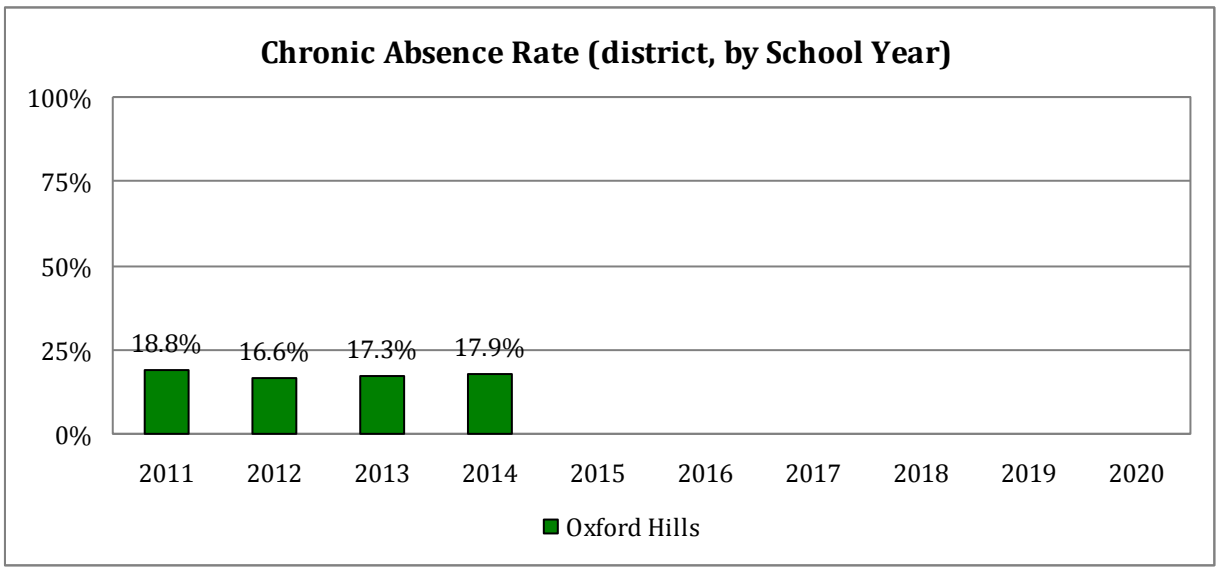
Community Service data from MSAD17 Infinite Campus database (as submitted to, and recorded by high school guidance department)

The District will maintain an Attendance Rate of **95%**.

- **Baseline:** District has consistently maintained a 95% attendance rate for the past 4 years.



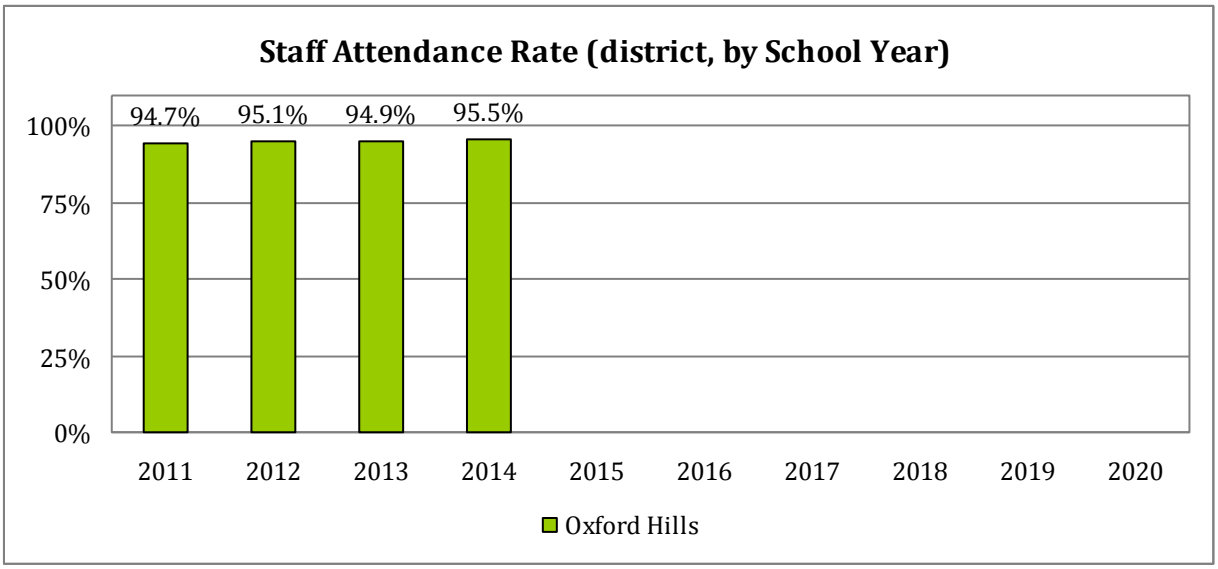
- **Reduce the district Chronic Absence rate below 10%**: A student is considered chronically absent if they have missed more than 10% of the days they are enrolled. *Includes excused or unexcused absences for students with a minimum of 35 enrolled days.*



Attendance data from MSAD17 Infinite Campus database (as recorded by teaching and secretarial staff)

The Aggregate Staff Attendance Rate for the District will increase to **98%**.

- **Baseline:** Over the past 4 years, the Staff Attendance Rate has been within half a percentage point either side of 95%.



Staff Attendance data from MSAD17 Advanced Data Systems payroll database.(as recorded by human resources and payroll staff)

The District Average Staff Attendance Rate will increase to **98%. Baseline (2013-14): Make graph.**

The Strategic Plan Categories

What follows are the **Lead Objectives** and the accompanying **Action Strategies** --organized across six categories -- that will guide the Oxford Hills School District over the next five years in its work to ensure that all students graduate with a high quality, world class education.

Category I	Teaching and Learning
Category II	Recruitment, Professional Development, Evaluation, and Retention of Staff
Category III	Financial Planning and Oversight
Category IV	Facilities Planning and Management
Category V	Communicating, Reporting, and Engaging the Public
Category VI	Development and Alumni Relations

What We Heard — Recurring Themes From the Public

We conducted a review of the community, faculty, staff, and student feedback collected by the Oxford Hills School District during its strategic planning process and identified the recurring themes. These themes represent opportunities for planning and action as the Board of Directors, administration, staff, and the eight communities of the school district commit to continuous improvement and progress over the next five years.

In crafting this Strategic Plan, these themes, gleaned from the public and the staff, were used as guideposts in shaping the priorities -- the **Lead Objectives** and **Action Strategies** -- which follow.

The Strategic Plan
Category I – Teaching and Learning

Overview:

Schools are first and foremost about students and their learning. And the quality of that learning is dependent on the effectiveness of teachers. In undertaking a strategic planning process, the area of **Teaching and Learning** is front and center, representing the heart and soul of a school district.

For the Oxford Hills School District to ensure success for all of its students, access to challenging learning opportunities – from Pre-K through high school – is the cornerstone of policy and practice. The goal is to design and implement an instructional program of high expectations, multiple pathways, and attention to both academic readiness and responsible and ethical character. Realizing such a goal requires attention to a coordinated design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, recognizing that students and their supporting parents navigate a system of schooling that needs to be consistent in expectations, while personalized in approach.

Today's students are sure to inherit a world ever-increasing in complexity, one where problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and astute retrieval of information will all be necessary. In order to be ready to contribute and work beyond the middle of this century, all students will need to be prepared for and aspire to some form of formal post-secondary learning. They must be ready to adapt to rampant change and embrace the need to be life-long learners.

Related Recurring Themes From The Public:

- Expand efforts to **motivate students** by offering them input into the design of their learning while addressing their interests.
- Stress the development of a **strong work ethic, perseverance and grit**, as well as **responsibility and respect**; provide learning experiences that help students acquire and develop these habits and attributes; ensure that district teachers include emphasis on these habits and attributes in daily instruction and learning experiences.
- Increase substantially **student connections to their communities**, aggressively reaching out to the public and businesses to make connections for learning and service; focus on internships, job shadowing, project learning, and mentoring.
- Build a strong sense of **citizenship through school-community partnerships** – use these connections to teach about our nation, our state, and responsibility.
- Provide to parents and students **feedback regarding students' "habits of work"** like collaboration, persistence, timeliness in completing work, as well as academic grades.
- Emphasize in the academic program instructional practice that leads to a strong literacy for each graduate in reading, writing, and listening, recognizing the importance of **communications skills across careers**.
- **Simplify the grading system** for students, parents – change high school grading to assist with college admissions – present system shortchanges students.

- Provide students learning experiences that **develop their skills to interpret, analyze, and evaluate the vast amount of information** that is expanding in the 21st century – make this skill as important as the other "basics."
- **Examine the success of the tech programs** at OHCHS, their structure and practices, using the findings to **design other applied learning** for students throughout the grades.
- Develop a comprehensive **school-community plan to raise aspirations and college attainment**, starting with students in the early grades and following students to graduation – elicit the help of everyone, from senior citizens to business leaders.
- Study the benefits and **logistics of a later school start for high school** students.
- Prioritize the area of **personal financial literacy**, ensuring that *all* students graduate with a sound understanding of economics, especially the impact on individuals and families.
- Stress **problem solving and critical thinking as "new basics"** for learning across the grades and curriculum – redesign the curriculum to have these skills, along with personal finance and information retrieval and evaluation, as core areas along with ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- Provide students with the experience of setting goals and reflecting on their learning through the development and guidance of **personal learning plans in middle and high school**.
- Develop formal training and a program that offers students the opportunity to **serve as mentors for younger students**.
- Stress the **health and wellness of students** in the school culture, the curriculum, and through programs, tracking key measures and reporting to the public.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides for much more **student-designed, student-led learning**.
- Design and implement, with **community organizations and businesses, a model mentoring program for students** aimed at dramatically elevating aspirations.
- Increase **real-world relevance** in instructional practice and lesson design, expanding **project learning opportunities in and outside of the school**, including community-based learning projects, internships, apprenticeships, early college, community service/volunteerism, virtual learning, study abroad, etc.
- Foster broad education outcomes through instruction and learning beyond traditional academic preparation in reading, writing, and mathematics to include a strong **focus on civic responsibility**, character development, and ethical literacy.

Lead Objective 1 – *High Expectations*: Increase achievement for all students through evidence-based instructional practices, effective parental partnerships, and elevated aspirations.

Action Strategies

a. Develop a comprehensive aspirations plan for students in K-12 and adult education, leading to individual learning plans for all students.

b. Develop an implementation plan for a proficiency-based diploma including policy revisions, graduation standards, grading, transcripts, assessment, and community engagement.

c. Engage the Board of Directors in the review, revision, and adoption of policies leading to full implementation of proficiency-based learning and graduation.

d. Ensure that graduates of Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School acquire and can demonstrate 21st century skills including problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, retrieval and analysis of information.

e. Ensure that Career and Technical offerings at OHCHS are contemporary and match the needs of the times; consider expanded opportunities in Information Technology, Computer Science, and other emerging areas.

f. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current Gifted and Talented program.

g. Align student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with the *Maine Learning Results* standards and performance expectations, making accommodations as necessary.

h. Ensure students apply workplace skills to accomplish real-world tasks (e.g. OHCEE internships, Region 11, Service Learning, Special Education, job placements).

i. Evaluate Alternative Education programming to ensure high expectations and demonstration of proficiency against graduation standards for all students enrolled.

j. Investigate expansion of academic electives and multiple pathways including student-designed learning.

k. Develop mentoring program for students (K-12) and in adult education such as transition points, afterschool programs, and advisory periods.

l. Link standards with experiential learning.

m. Pursue and develop a formal partnership with higher education such as a medical school.

Lead Objective 2 – *Multiple Pathways:* Develop and implement multiple pathways for learning that are built on student choice with the expectation that every student will demonstrate significant growth in knowledge and skills, academically and as responsible young citizens.

Action Strategies

a. Ensure program consistency and coordination at all key transition points including a review of multiple pathways offerings at the middle and high school levels.

b. Implement flexible scheduling through expanded 1:1 access to enhance and provide early college, blended learning, and other educational experiences for Pre-K-12 and adult education students.

c. Investigate options for redesigned and flexible staffing to meet varied student needs.

d. Develop and implement expanded visual and performing arts opportunities.

e. Explore possibilities for expanding drama and music offerings.

f. Expand access to online courses and other learning experiences in Pre-K-12 and in adult education including enhancement, intervention, AP, and college offerings.

g. Establish the expectation of an early college course or other college learning experience for each student prior to graduation.

"Honesty and integrity are important skills that our kids should learn. And persistence, critical thinking, analyzing so much information, are key skills too."
— A Citizen of Oxford Hills School District

Lead Objective 3 – *Experiential Learning:* Engage students in the community and workplace by providing relevant and challenging real-world learning opportunities.

Action Strategies

a. Expand at all levels – Pre-K-12 – experiential, applied, and project learning opportunities such as science fairs, robotics, and Olympiads.

b. Design and offer professional development for district staff centered on implementing experiential and project learning.

c. Collaborate with business, civic, and non-profit organizations to generate greater awareness and cultivate collaborative efforts for students to engage in projects that connect to their communities and the world of work.

d. Create pilots across the district that offer elementary, middle, high school, and adult education students applied learning opportunities focused on real world issues like community planning, environmental and conservation projects, local government.

Lead Objective 4 – *STEM*: Increase K-12 and adult education student performance in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Action Strategies

a. Redesign the science curriculum and units of study to reflect NGSS:
- Engineering Design Process
- Content Standards
- Cross-cutting

b. Ensure that the components of the district STEM curricula are vertically aligned, K-12.

c. Investigate co-curricular activities related to STEM fields.

d. Create a K-12 data warehouse related to STEM to analyze and track progress.

e. Expand relationships/partnerships with organizations such as Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, Siemens, and Jackson Labs.

f. Provide staff development related to the standards framework of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

g. Utilize Career and Technical Education programs to promote and instruct STEM areas of study.

Lead Objective 5 – *Citizenship:* Implement practices that foster and maintain student voice and positive school relationships that develop community, build character, and support learning.

Action Strategies

a. Implement restorative justice practices across the district and provide professional development.

b. Ensure that the district curriculum includes a focus on civic engagement, global citizenship, and ethical decision-making.

c. Develop health and wellness educational opportunities for students, staff, and community members.

d. Expand student governance, community service, and co-curricular opportunities for students.

Lead Objective 6 – *Communication*: Ensure strong instructional practices focused on reading, writing, speaking, and listening aimed at developing effective communication skills that students need to apply across careers.

Action Strategies

a. Continue engagement with the University of Maine Partnership Literacy Collaborative.

b. Provide staff development related to literacy and coaching.

c. Align district curriculum and assessment practices to the Maine Learning Results, including the Guiding Principles, the Common Core State Standards, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment's expectations related to reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

d. Create a K–12 data warehouse related to literacy.

Lead Objective 7 – *Grading:* Provide meaningful feedback to students and parents about student achievement and attainment.

Action Strategies

a. Expand the development and reporting of student progress around habits of work, dispositions, and cross-content learnings.

b. Increase opportunities for improved communication and engagement of parents regarding their students' learning and progress.

c. Review available options and implement changes in the grading system as the District moves to a proficiency-based approach to learning and graduation.

d. Examine alternative approaches to academic recognition and reporting through a revised transcript, the use of a standards-based GPA (Grade Point Average), and Latin Honors.

The Strategic Plan
Category II – Recruitment, Professional Development, Evaluation, and Retention of Staff

Overview:

School districts that commit to excellence and expect learning opportunities for their students to be of the highest quality, demand the best in their human resources: the faculty, the administration, and the staff. Schools are as good as the adults who provide instruction, offer a myriad of support services, and guide with effective leadership. The employment and retention of capable, caring, and high-performing individuals represents a very large percentage of the overall investment citizens make in their schools. Ensuring high performance from teachers, administrators, and support staff necessitates strong processes and policies for the recruitment, professional development, evaluation, and retention of district employees.

Related Recurring Themes From The Public:

- Stress the development of a **strong work ethic, perseverance and grit**, as well as **responsibility and respect**; provide learning experiences that help students acquire and develop these habits and attributes; ensure that district teachers include emphasis on these habits and attributes in daily instruction and learning experiences.
- Stress **problem solving and critical thinking as "new basics"** for learning across the grades and curriculum – redesign the curriculum to have these skills, along with personal finance and information retrieval and evaluation, as core areas along with ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- Examine the potential for a comprehensive **mentoring program for teachers new to the profession**, using it as a support practice and as a recruitment tool.
- Prioritize **professional development for all teachers** in acquiring knowledge, skills, and best practices for **motivating today's students**, from effective lesson design to appropriate technology applications, to adjusting to learning preferences.
- Increase **real-world relevance** in instructional practice and lesson design, expanding **project learning opportunities in and outside of the school**, including community-based learning projects, internships, apprenticeships, early college, community service/volunteerism, virtual learning, study abroad, etc.
- Improve dramatically the schools' **efforts to engage parents**, encouraging staff to have websites, while embracing **more use of social media**.

Lead Objective 1 – *Recruitment:* Ensure that the Oxford Hills School District seeks and employs highly qualified and talented individuals to its faculty, administration, and support staff.

Action Strategies

a. Identify those positions that are most difficult to fill with capable individuals and develop a comprehensive plan to improve and broaden recruitment efforts.

b. Identify methods to become more competitive in successfully recruiting candidates:
- Examine and compare salary schedules with other districts and any comparable positions in the private sector.
- Record and review reasons for declinations of offers of employment.
- Develop a plan to incorporate identified desired staff characteristics in the design of advertising, interviewing, and placement practices.

c. Identify and publish a package of non-salary benefits, e.g. Oxford Hills University, labs, and equipment specific to each position.

d. Identify and implement improvements to the district website and explore use of social media as an emerging tool for recruitment.

e. Shape an advertisement, screening, and interview process that communicates the expected practices and characteristics of employees of the Oxford Hills School District. (See Evaluation below for details).

Lead Objective 2 – *Professional Development*: Design and implement a systematic and focused approach to professional development, resulting in increased student achievement, safe learning environments, and an atmosphere that fosters readiness to learn at high levels for all students.

Action Strategies

a. Ensure that the administration, staff, and the Board are apprised of the results of the Curriculum Coordinating Council's examination of the District's professional development work including efforts to: 1) complete an audit of all sponsored learning activities for staff; 2) identify the summary research on what type of professional development leads to increased student achievement; 3) the potential benefits to a mentoring system for new staff; and 4) identify priority options and inclusions for a district calendar and plan of professional development activities.

b. Design and implement Oxford Hills University as a robust clearinghouse of learning and professional growth opportunities for district staff to access.

c. Ensure that Oxford Hills University and its offerings have design features that align and

focus personal professional plans with district goals, all aimed at school effectiveness through increased student achievement and improved school operations.

d. Utilize efficiently one-to-one computing and explore the potential of emerging models of instruction to promote technology integration to enhance instruction.

Lead Objective 3 – *Evaluation*: Refine and revise the district evaluation process to ensure that all staff meet or exceed the performance expectations of their respective positions.

Action Strategies

a. Review, revise, and implement a new process for the evaluation of the district teaching faculty and the administration staff.

b. Foster a district-wide workplace climate that values professional growth and continuous improvement.

c. Implement in all evaluation, supervision, and recruitment practices the characteristics and practices outlined below:

As contributing members of the District's learning community, all Oxford Hills staff members:

- *Model a strong work ethic, perseverance and grit, as well as responsibility and respect.*
- *Utilize best practices for motivating today's students in a safe, supportive learning environment.*
- *Demonstrate knowledge in the development of real-world learning experiences and community partnerships to provide students opportunities for extensions of learning, applied learning, community service, and citizenship.*
- *Demonstrate willingness and ability to collaborate, engage, and communicate with colleagues, parents and the public.*

Further, instructional staff emphasize and employ practices that lead to improvement in student achievement by:

- Instilling problem-solving and critical thinking as "new basics" for learning across the grades;
- Delivering strong literacy instruction across content areas;
- Developing student skills to apply, interpret, analyze, and evaluate the vast, ever-expanding amount of information;
- Employing effective lesson design by adjusting to personal learning needs and preference, including appropriate technology applications.

Lead Objective 4 – *Retention*: Ensure that Oxford Hills School District develops a system to retain highly qualified individuals.

Action Strategies

a. Develop a method of collecting and analyzing exit data on individuals leaving the District, identifying trends and taking action as needed.

b. Design and implement an employee satisfaction survey to inform practice around creating a positive work climate.

c. Ensure a consistent practice of eliciting input from staff on the budgetary process.

d. Expand partnerships with area businesses to offer staff appreciation benefits.

e. Explore other staff incentives such as group discounts, use of exercise facilities, etc.

f. Develop a formal mentoring program for teachers new to the profession, using it as a support practice for recruitment, retention, and improved performance.

g. Design and update Google Personnel Link.

h. Promote opportunities for collaboration, providing time while using technology to assist with connections.

The Strategic Plan
Category III – Financial Planning and Oversight

Overview:

The deep recession and slow economic recovery have required school districts to be extremely fiscally responsible, striving to protect the quality of education while acknowledging the burden for taxpayers. The lengthy downturn has been especially difficult for schools and districts that have always been modest in their expenditures. Stretched in many ways, but still expected to deliver "more with less", public schools are challenged in providing the education students need despite shrinking funding.

The Oxford Hills School District is a case in point. Fiscally responsible year in and year out, ranking among the state's most frugal school systems, the District is committed to move the effectiveness of its schools to the next level. However, greater financial investments will be needed to support continuous improvements in the classroom, attract and retain top staff, and attend to facilities needs.

Related Recurring Themes From The Public:

- Pursue an **increase in school spending**, but ensure efficiency of operation and have a clear plan for the new spending and the additional impact on taxpayers – cautious support for additional investments that are focused – leading areas for increased spending include **improved class size at the elementary level, technology, and professional development** for teachers.
- Address the **student-teacher ratios** in the elementary grades, lowering them to ensure a **personalized approach**.
- Study the benefits and **logistics of a later school start for high school** students.

Lead Objective 1 – *Adequate Funding and the Budget Process*: Undertake a comprehensive communication effort to inform District communities and citizens on the effectiveness and implementation of funding secured through the school budget.

Action Strategies

a. Construct a communication plan comprised of varied media such as newsletters, forums, blogs, videos, and public announcement releases designed to clarify how approved school funding is translated to targeted expenditures in support of instruction and operations.

b. Prepare and present the school budget as a biennial process, specifying the recommended state and local funding for the upcoming fiscal year, while forecasting a budget profile for the second year.

Lead Objective 2 – *Recruitment and Retention of Students*: Seek to expand the district enrollment as a means to stabilize base financial support, while strengthening the reputation of the schools.

Action Strategies

a. Establish a District Student Recruitment Team charged with designing strategies and a plan that targets potential students from homeschooled settings, independent school programs, students who have left the system, and potential adult students.

b. Examine and enhance K-12 practices to ensure that students new to the District experience strong support leading to smooth, successful transitions.

c. Pursue discussions and planning centered on the implementation of universal, district-wide Pre-K programming.

d. Ensure that District communication efforts entail a strategy to showcase the schools of the Oxford Hills School District as “schools of choice”, using a host of media to underscore the attributes of the district, its efforts to plan for the future, and its commitment to be highly effective in its learning experiences for students and its support operations.

Lead Objective 3 – ***Expanded Revenue Streams*:** Pursue funding sources outside of the regular school budget as a way to enhance instructional programs and facilities.

Action Strategies

a. Create a school-community team, guided by the newly established Development Office, tasked with seeking targeted investments in support of various school initiatives by identifying and engaging alumni, community members, and various groups and/or organizations with the sole purpose of connecting these individuals and groups to district programs, providing them opportunities to invest in our schools.

b. Identify – through the leadership of the Development Office – "focus" individuals as a way to tell or display the successes of Oxford Hills alumni who have benefited from the education they received and tie this recognition to a Hall of Fame or Hall of Honor that also displays pictures and stories of our benefactors.

"We need to do better than just raising student aspirations—we need to help our students to actually enroll in college or in some formal learning after high school."
— A Citizen

The Strategic Plan
Category IV – Facilities: Comprehensive Planning and Management

Overview:

Great school facilities do not guarantee excellence in teaching and learning. School buildings, their sound condition, appropriate design, and adequacy of space contribute to the learning opportunities available to students, address issues of health and well-being for students and staff alike, and provide needed flexibility for desired change in student grouping patterns and in the approach to instruction.

Attending to the planning and management aspects of buildings and grounds through capital improvement plans and maintenance schedules is prudent fiscal policy since major and minor capital outlays can be anticipated, budgeted, prioritized, and facility needs can be addressed—often at lower cost and without crisis.

Lead Objective 1 – *Planning Forward*: Undertake a series of planning efforts to ensure that school facilities – all grounds and buildings – adequately support the instructional and extra-curricular programming offered by the District.

Action Strategies

a. Extend the existing five-year Comprehensive Facilities and Capital Facilities plans to ten years to target renovation, addition, learning upgrades, specific projects, and other construction needs district-wide.

b. Conduct a long-term cohort survival and potential in-migration study to project enrollment by town to determine facility, equipment, and technology needs district-wide.

c. Explore funding options for the replacement of the OHMS North and South Campuses.

d. Explore the feasibility of renovating or replacing the Agnes Gray and Legion Schools.

e. Pursue funding alternatives to upgrading the Gouin Field facility and other district athletic facilities.

f. Seek an alternative and efficient transportation and maintenance facility.

g. Develop plans for the Fox School complex and expansion of daytime facilities for Adult Education.

Lead Objective 2 – *Energy Efficiency*: Explore opportunities and implement improved and reliable technologies that maximize energy efficiencies district-wide.

Action Strategies

a. Pursue strategies to increase economic energy efficiencies district-wide.

b. Engage students and staff in competitive energy-saving projects with clearly established goals and targets that promote ongoing efficiencies.

c. Evaluate opportunities for establishing a propane fueled bus fleet.

Lead Objective 3 – *Maintenance*: Address in a systematic and timely fashion the regular recurring maintenance needs and upgrades to buildings and grounds.

Action Strategies

a. Update the ten-year facilities plans annually and present to the Board of Directors the funding needed to address current projects.

b. Update annually a five-year replacement plan for facilities, transportation and food services.

c. Provide opportunities for the operation and budget committees to meet to develop priorities in funding facilities projects.

The Strategic Plan
Category V – Communicating, Reporting, and Engaging the Public

Overview:

Public education is often the focus of criticism when school performance lags and citizens ask hard questions about the return on taxpayer investments. Oftentimes, schools have not developed or have not maintained a comprehensive set of communication and reporting practices that reach out to inform the greater public about promising practices, noteworthy accomplishments, challenges, improvement plans, or needs. Redesigning and sustaining a robust communication and reporting approach, multi-faceted and transparent, is a key ingredient to the success of implementing this strategic plan. At the center of this work will be efforts to engage—on a continuous basis—the parents, citizens, businesses, and civic groups from the District's eight communities.

Related Recurring Themes From The Public:

- Increase substantially **student connections to their communities,** aggressively reaching out to the public and businesses to make connections for learning and service; focus on internships, job shadowing, project learning, and mentoring.
- Build a strong sense of **citizenship through school-community partnerships** – use these connections to teach about our nation, our state, and responsibility.
- Provide to parents and students **feedback regarding students' "habits of work"** like collaboration, persistence, timeliness in completing work, as well as academic grades.
- **Simplify the grading system** for students, parents – change high school grading to assist with college admissions – present system shortchanges students.
- Expand outreach and communication efforts with parents and the public through **more open forums** and opportunities to offer suggestions about student needs and the direction of the schools.
- Develop a comprehensive **school-community plan to raise aspirations and college attainment**, starting with students in the early grades and following students to graduation – elicit the help of everyone, from senior citizens to business leaders.
- Ensure that the Board, staff, and administration take action to **implement the promises and intent in the Mission and Core Values** – strong support and many compliments on the words, the language of this document, but considerable concern and doubt about efforts and commitment to make the intent a reality.
- Provide for genuine student voice and **elicit student feedback** through surveys, exit interviews, and focus groups.
- Design and implement, with **community organizations and businesses, a model mentoring program for students** aimed at dramatically elevating aspirations.
- Build a stronger **outreach to parents**, strengthening the relationship between home and school at all levels.

- Develop a comprehensive approach and system of **following Oxford Hills graduates** as they matriculate in **college programs and pursue careers**, eliciting their feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their preparation, while also tracking who returns to the area.
- Track, analyze, report, and publish a listing of **post-secondary institutions where Oxford Hills graduates have been accepted** and where they have enrolled.
- Design and implement a formal survey and **exit interviews of seniors**, as well as a special focus group program for graduates returning during the December following graduation.
- Redesign and **improve the district and school websites**.
- Improve dramatically the schools' **efforts to engage parents**, encouraging staff to have websites, while embracing **more use of social media**.
- Develop a communication plan that increases efforts to **tell the good stories** about successful practices in the schools, maximizing **coverage in local and state media**.

"I have multiple degrees, but I can't help my children with their homework. Give parents some training and assistance" — A Parent

Lead Objective 1 – *Comprehensive Communication Plan*: Develop a District-wide system of communication delivery that is transparent and inclusive of the public, families, staff, and students, including adult learners.

Action Strategies

a. Re-design the District website.
- Collect and provide information, and be intentionally inclusive of the mission and core beliefs.
- Ensure the district website is the gateway to each individual school site.
- Include building level Mission Statements of each school.
- Develop student, faculty, and administration YouTube links.

b. Develop and strengthen student voice.
- Create monthly meetings between students and board members.
- Develop a district-wide system for surveying students at various grade levels.
- Spotlight student work regularly on the website and in the community.
- Conduct exit interviews and an exit survey with seniors.
- Invite returning Oxford Hills graduates to participate in focus groups after they complete the first semester of college.

c. Expand community engagement efforts.
- Cultivate and develop community collaborations with outreach opportunities for learning.
- Develop and expand project and service learning opportunities for students.
- Refine reporting and grading to students and parents.
- Explore an electronic system (e.g. portal) to enhance communication between parents and staff for the Pre-K – 6th grade population)

d. Enhance the electronic system of communication (portal) for grades 7-12.

e. Communicate grading standards and expectations in an accessible manner for all stakeholders including the greater community, future employers, parents, and colleges.

"Our students need to be out in the community, experiencing real applications of learning through projects and relationships." — A Citizen

Lead Objective 2 – *Profiling Our Successes and Student Accomplishments:* Develop a District-wide system to showcase the advantages and opportunities available for students.

Action Strategies

a. Utilize the website to showcase:
- Student work that reflects the diversity of students and programs
- Student achievement and progress
- School calendars and events
- Community partnerships

b. Analyze the potential utilization of school instructional programs to support telling the "good stories":
- Website maintenance
- Effective delivery of information to local papers
- Multimedia production
- Social Media

Lead Objective: 3 – *Engaging Parents*: Develop multiple and effective outreach channels to parents.

Action Strategies

a. Develop a parent liaison in each school.

b. Investigate opportunities for outreach in non-traditional settings.

c. Expand and enhance multimedia messaging and communication across all K-12 and non-traditional levels.

d. Develop an end-of-the-year survey instrument for parents, eliciting their feedback on school effectiveness and their child's experiences, with the results to be reviewed by teachers and the administration.

The Strategic Plan
Category VI – Development and Alumni Relations

Overview:

Garnering support for adequate financial investments, as well as for change and improvement, is a priority for schools and school districts as they navigate the challenges of the economy and the calls for improved school and student performance.

The Oxford Hills School District recognizes the need to diversify its revenues through grants from foundations, government, and philanthropic individuals. Designing and implementing a sustained approach to the continuous improvement and effectiveness of the District requires enhanced capacity and resources that can be realized through an active development program. In partnership with an aggressive outreach to Oxford Hills alumni, the District believes it can realize stronger support and energize pride in all that the schools do on behalf of its students and communities.

Related Recurring Themes From The Public:

- Increase substantially **student connections to their communities**, aggressively reaching out to the public and businesses to make connections for learning and service; focus on internships, job shadowing, project learning, and mentoring.
- Develop a comprehensive **school-community plan to raise aspirations and college attainment**, starting with students in the early grades and following students to graduation – elicit the help of everyone, from senior citizens to business leaders.
- Design and implement, with **community organizations and businesses, a model mentoring program for students** aimed at dramatically elevating aspirations.
- Increase **real-world relevance** in instructional practice and lesson design, expanding **project learning opportunities in and outside of the school**, including community-based learning projects, internships, apprenticeships, early college, community service/volunteerism, virtual learning, study abroad, etc.
- Develop a comprehensive approach and system of **following Oxford Hills graduates** as they matriculate in **college programs and pursue careers**, eliciting their feedback about their preparation, the strengths and weaknesses, while also tracking who returns to the area.
- Design and implement a formal survey and **exit interviews of seniors**, as well as a special focus group program for graduates returning during the December following graduation.
- Track, analyze, report, and publish a listing of post-secondary institutions where Oxford Hills graduates have been accepted and where they have enrolled.

Lead Objective 1 – *Development*: Create a development office for the District.

Action Strategies

a. Research other schools and districts with development offices to learn about the process for starting one, including financial support, needs for staffing, and responsibilities.

b. Research possible funding sources for a combined development officer/alumni relations position.

c. Employ a Development Director to lead the District's development efforts.

d. Investigate options for charitable giving through a Development Office or other avenue, establishing a streamlined system for allowing dedicated donations for a particular school, department, or program.

Lead Objective 2 – *Recognition and Publicity of Alumni*: Communicate through portraits of Oxford Hills graduates the success of their lives and careers.

Action Strategies

a. Create and maintain an alumni website/newsletter/Viking Alumni App.

b. Highlight alumni success stories in the media, throughout our schools, and events.

c. Begin an Alumni "Hall of Fame" program. Choose Alumni-of-the-Year, and Citizens-of-the-Year (citizens who make a considerable contribution to the District).

"We need to ignite a passion for learning in each and every student."
— A Citizen of Oxford Hills School District

Lead Objective 3 – *Alumni Relations*: Develop a clearinghouse and database of alumni resources.

Action Strategies

a. Create a system for locating and surveying alumni.

b. Gather information from alumni about their careers and education, the contribution of MSAD #17 to their post-graduation success, and their advice for students.

c. Connect directly to alumni, eliciting interest in becoming involved at OHCHS or other District schools as an aspirational speaker, mentor, panel member.

d. Develop a list and engage OHCHS graduates willing to serve as speakers (i.e., graduation, inspirational, aspirational), mentors, or as guest experts to classrooms, panel members, instructional units in the classroom.

e. Re-establish Homecoming as an alumni event.

"The district needs to engage parents to be more active while also recruiting other adults to be mentors and volunteers." — A Citizen of Oxford Hills School District

Taking Action: *Putting the Plan in Play*

A blueprint to guide the District over the next five years, this Strategic Plan is a collection of priorities for action that are intended to elevate the effectiveness of the educational program and the general operations of the schools. Adopted by the Board of Directors, the implementation of the Plan rests with the Superintendent of Schools. Both the Board and the Superintendent share in the responsibility of monitoring and assessing progress.

School and program administrators, under the direction of and with the approval of the Superintendent, will develop work plans for implementation of the **Lead Objectives** and **Action Strategies** that fall in their respective areas of responsibility. Following a targeted timeline for each **Action Strategy**, administrators and their staff will initiate implementation, providing an annual status report to the Superintendent.

Through an annual "State of the District Forum" and accompanying comprehensive communication efforts, the Superintendent will apprise the Board, the staff, and the public of the status of implementation of the **Action Strategies** outlined in the Strategic Plan, as well as progress toward attainment of the **Measures and Performance Targets**. Updated progress on the measures will be available on the District website in the form of a data dashboard.

The Board of Directors, formally responsible for adoption of the Strategic Plan, will monitor progress as well. Each standing committee of the Board will identify aspects of the Plan that come under the breadth of responsibility of their committee, reporting progress in implementation to the full Board.

Thus, the accountability for putting the Action Strategies into play is shared by the Board, administration, faculty, and staff with progress reports to the citizens of the Oxford Hills School District.

To ensure that the five-year plan remains responsive to the needs of the District and planning for the future is an ongoing process, the Board and administration will initiate the work for a successor plan in 2018, year 4 of this strategic plan.

Appendix I – Board of Directors

Mr. Ronald Kugell, Chair
Oxford

Dr. Donald Ware, Vice Chair
Norway

Town of Harrison
Mr. Albert Lisowski
Mrs. Ann Macro

Town of Hebron
Mrs. Elizabeth Swift
Mr. Lewis Williams

Town of Norway
Mr. Jared Cash
Mr. Steve Cummings
Mr. Don Gouin

Town of Paris
Mr. Buddy Coffren
Mr. Curtis Cole
Mr. Michael Dignan
Mr. Henry Raymond

Town of Otisfield
Thomas W. Moore, Jr.
Mr. Joseph Vaillancourt

Town of Oxford
Ms. Sharon Chamming
Mr. David Dunn
Ms. Faith Gittings*
Mr. Henry Jackson*
Mrs. Olive Sanborn

Town of Waterford
Mrs. Judy Green
Mr. Barry Patrie

Town of West Paris
Mr. Nicholas DiConzo
Mr. Toby Whitman

** On the board while the strategic plan was developed*

Appendix II – Strategic Planning Team

Jared Cash, Chair
Norway

Kim BessetteDr, Norway

Catherine Bickford, aris

Rick Colpitts, SAD 17

Jody Deegan, Hebron

Celia Dieterich, Paris

Kathy Elkins, SAD 17

Don Gouin, Norway

Judy Green, Waterford

Stephanie Grover, Norway

Patrick Hartnett, SAD 17, Hebron

Myung Kim, Paris

Shawn Lambert, MVR 11

Katie Letourneau, Hebron

Jason Long, Paris

Nancy McClean, SAD 17, West Paris

Marge Medd, Norway

Ted Moccia, SAD 17, Norway

Tom Moore, Otisfield

Jane Morse, SAD 17, Waterford

Tara Pelletier, SAD 17, Paris

David Stearns, Oxford

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The Strategic Planning Team extends its appreciation to Brewster Burns for capturing students, staff, and our communities in the photos, which grace this document.

A hearty thank you is also extended to Mike Dunn and Sam Iggulden for their work on the performance data and graphs.

Appendix III – Demographic Profile

(as of October 1st 2014)

Our Students

Race/Ethnicity	Students	%
▪ Hispanic	64	1.84%
▪ American Indian/Alaskan Native	21	0.60%
▪ Asian	22	0.63%
▪ Black/African American	24	0.69%
▪ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1	0.03%
▪ White	3260	93.65%
▪ Multi-Racial	89	2.56%

Our Faculty, Staff, and Administration

Position	Staff	%
▪ Faculty	270	48.65%
▪ Education Technicians	81	14.59%
▪ Transportation	44	7.93%
▪ Custodian/Maintenance	42	7.57%
▪ Secretaries	39	7.03%
▪ School Nutrition	28	5.05%
▪ Administrators & Supervisors	25	4.50%
▪ Healthcare & Service Providers	19	3.42%
▪ Technology	7	1.26%

District Enrollment

Enrollment	Students	%
▪ Pre-K (4YO, Early Kindergarten)	147	4.2%
▪ Elementary (K-6)	1760	50.6%
▪ Middle (7-8)	485	13.9%
▪ High (9-12)	1089	31.3%
Total Pre-K-12 Enrollment	3481	

Adult Education

Program Type	Students
Academic/Vocational Programs	131
Enrichment/Community Programs	138
Total Adult Education Enrollment	**267**

Appendix IV – Glossary of Terms

Great Schools Partnership has created a database-Glossary of Education Reform. This comprehensive online resource describes widely used school-improvement terms, concepts, and strategies for journalists, parents, and community members. The database may be found at the link below:

http://edglossary.org/proficiency/

Oxford Elementary School
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