

Gresham-Barlow



School District

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Board Work Session

### **AGENDA**

November 16, 2017

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

November 16, 2017

Special Board Meeting / Work Session – 6 p.m.

**Partnership Room  
Center for Advanced Learning (CAL)  
1484 NW Civic Drive, Gresham, OR**

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**I. CALL TO ORDER****II. ROLL CALL**

_____ Kris Howatt, Chair	_____ Kathy Ruthruff, Director
_____ Sharon Garner, Vice-Chair	_____ Blake Petersen, Director
_____ Carla Piluso, Director	
_____ John Hartsock, Director	
_____ Matt O'Connell, Director	_____ A. Katrise Perera, Superintendent

**III. ACTION ITEMS**First Reading

1. Bond: Security - Door Locks/Hardware ..... Schofield

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

None ..... n/a

**V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

2. Academic Audit .....	Perera
3. Meeting Protocol .....	Howatt

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Nov. 30, 2017: Board Work Session - 6 p.m.  
Partnership Room  
Center for Advanced Learning

Nov. 23, 2017: No Board Meeting  
Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 7, 2017: Board Work Session - 6 p.m.  
Council Chambers Conference Room  
Public Safety and Schools Building

Gresham-Barlow School District No. 10 Jt.  
Agenda – Special Board Meeting / Work Session  
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Dec. 7, 2017: Regular Board Meeting - 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers  
Public Safety and Schools Building

VII. ADJOURN

*AKP:sa:11/10/17:2:49 PM*

**GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**1331 NW Eastman Parkway**  
**Gresham, OR 97030-3825**

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: A. Katrise Perera  
Mike Schofield

DATE: November 16, 2017

RE: No. 1 – Bond: Security – Door Locks/Hardware

EXPLANATION: As the board is aware, student and staff safety is an important component of the 2016 capital construction bond. Last Spring the administration and district staff determined a standard for door locks/hardware across the district. In early October the district solicited bids for door locks/hardware replacements for East Orient Elementary, Highland Elementary, Powell Valley Elementary and West Gresham Elementary.

The district received bids as follows:

Chown Hardware - \$216,884  
JS Perrott - \$177,659

Bidding for additional schools in the district will take place this Winter.

PRESENTER: Mike Schofield

SUPPLEMENTARY  
MATERIALS: None

RECOMMENDATION: After confirming the scope of work on both bids, the administration recommends the selection of JS Perrott.

REQUESTED ACTION: Approve JS Perrott as the lowest responsible bidder pending successful contract negotiations at an amount not to exceed \$177,659.

MS:mh:sa



**GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**1331 NW Eastman Parkway**  
**Gresham, OR 97030-3825**

TO: Board of Directors  
FROM: A. Katrise Perera  
DATE: November 16, 2017  
RE: No. 2 – Academic Audit

EXPLANATION: Felicity Educational Services (FES) conducted an Academic Audit for the Gresham-Barlow School District in October 2017. The initial draft of the Academic Audit Report was shared with the board at the November 2, 2017 board meeting.

Time has been set-aside on tonight's agenda to further discuss the Academic Audit Report and review the recommendations provided by FES.

PRESENTER: Mike Nekritz

SUPPLEMENTARY  
MATERIALS: None

RECOMMENDATION: This report is being provided as information only.

REQUESTED ACTION: No action is required at this time.

:sa

## Results from the Gresham-Barlow School District Online Survey- Academic Audit

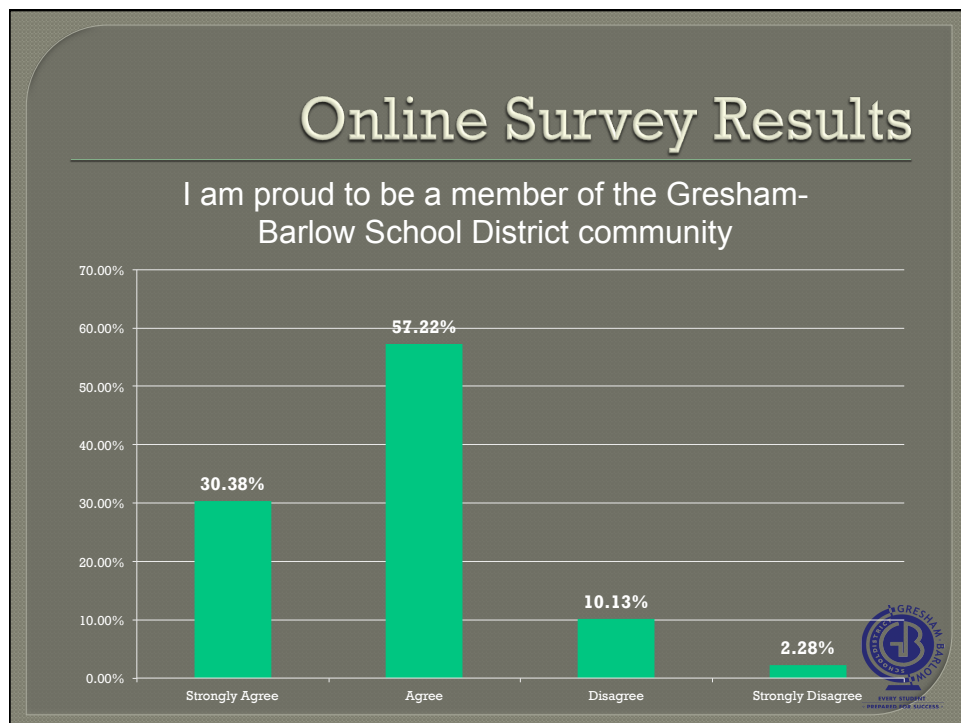
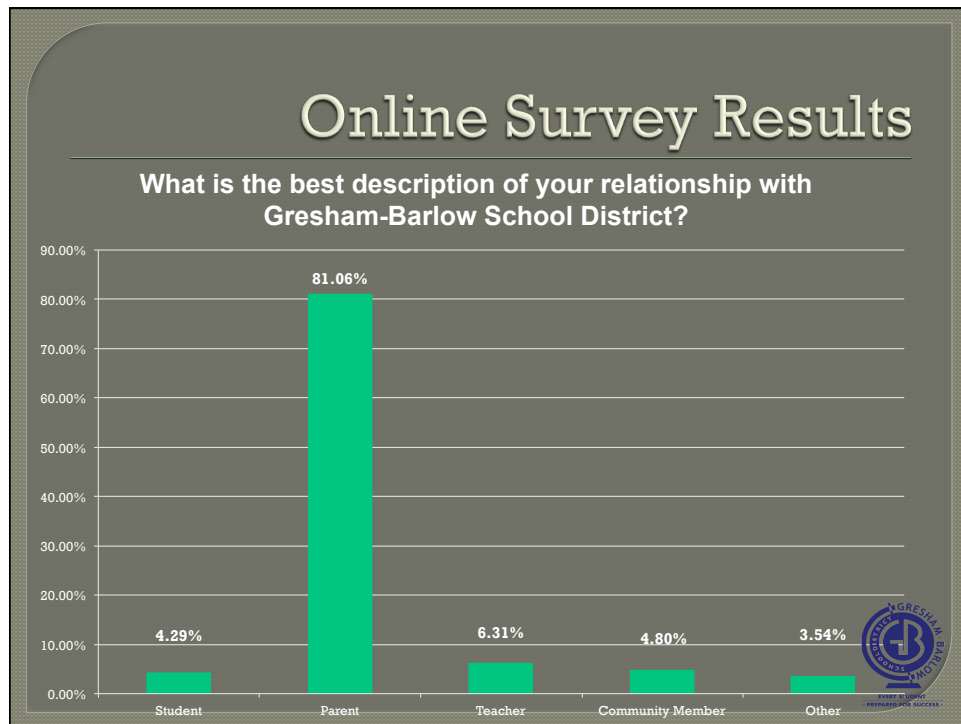


## Online Survey Results

### Participation:

- 420 Total Participants
- All Schools were represented
- A Large Number of Respondents had Multiple Identified Schools
- Greatest Numbers identified high schools representative
- Survey provided in Spanish with 16 respondents
- ZERO responses had to be thrown out for inappropriate or statistically invalid responses





## Assessment of the District

The following slides show the degree of agreement with statements

A score of 2 would be strongly AGREE and -2 would be strongly DISAGREE.

A Zero would mean there is no agreement or disagreement.

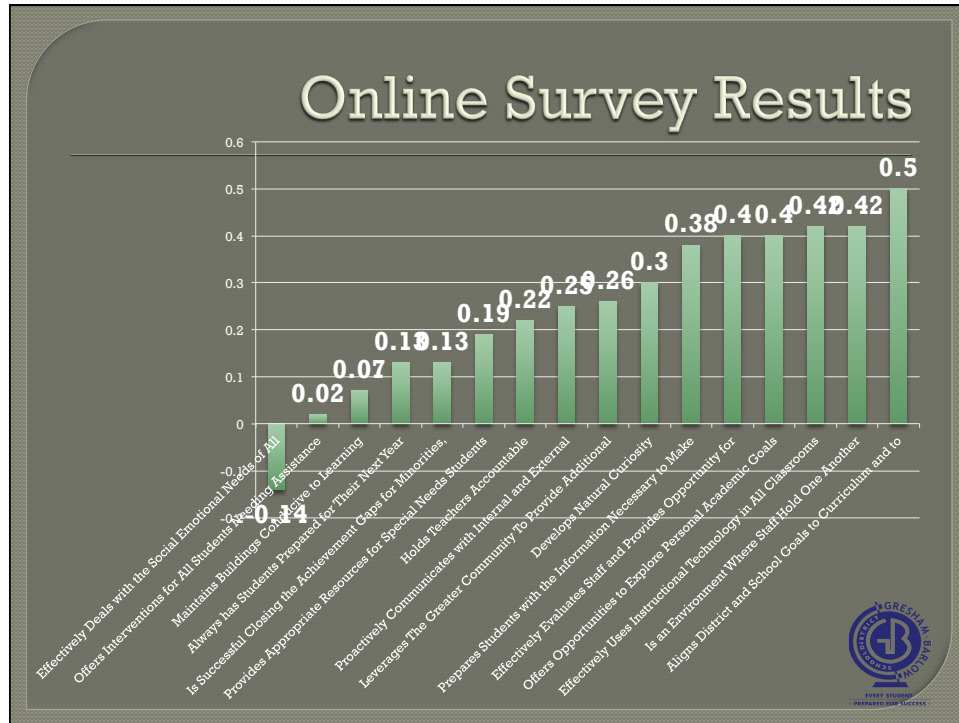
**\*\*The higher the score- the better!**

Scores below .5 are considered relatively WEAK agreement. Above .5 are positive agreement.

## LOWEST SCORING ITEMS-

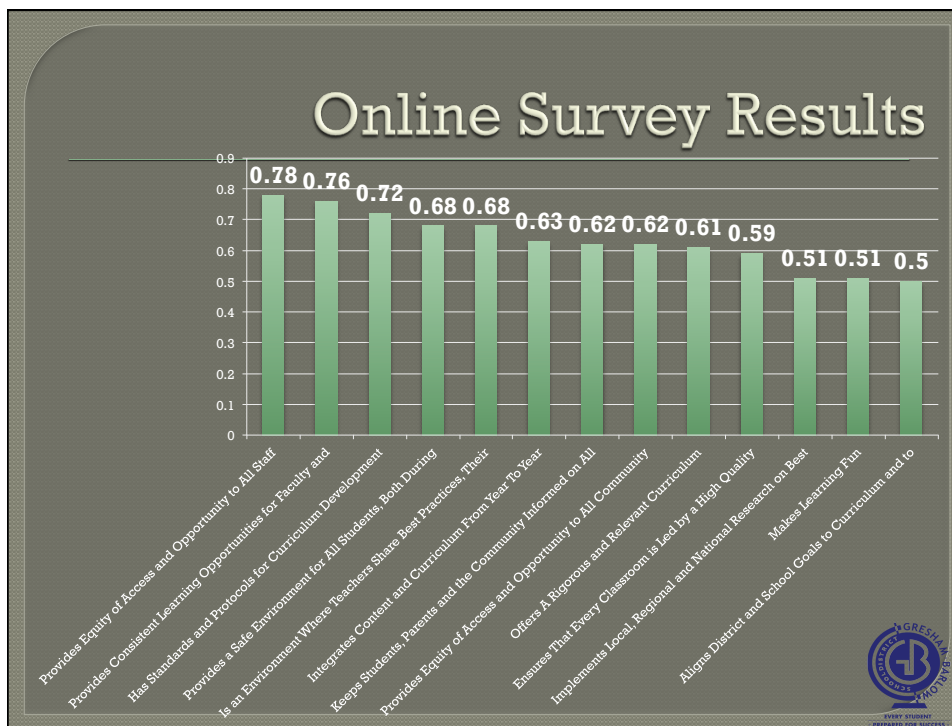
These areas need more attention!

Effectively Deals with the Social Emotional Needs of All Students	-0.14
Offers Interventions for All Students Needing Assistance	0.02
Maintains Buildings Conducive to Learning	0.07
Always has Students Prepared for Their Next Year	0.13
Is Successful Closing the Achievement Gaps for Minorities, Students of Poverty and Other Sub Groups	0.13
Provides Appropriate Resources for Special Needs Students	0.19



### HIGHEST SCORING ITEMS- Items to Celebrate!

Provides Equity of Access and Opportunity to All Staff	<b>0.78</b>
Provides Consistent Learning Opportunities for Faculty and Staff	<b>0.76</b>
Has Standards and Protocols for Curriculum Development	<b>0.72</b>
Provides a Safe Environment for All Students, Both During School Hours and During Evening and Weekend Activities	<b>0.68</b>
Is an Environment Where Teachers Share Best Practices, Their Personal Areas of Expertise and Work Product	<b>0.68</b>



## Online Survey Results

### **PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE: REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES**


“Enthusiastically positive about their future, and their place in our world community. Goal oriented life long learner who is hungry to learn more, to find their role and do their part to better everyone. Strong, intelligent, empathetic, and university bound!”

“Knowledge of their strengths and how to use them. Positive outlook for their future, that they can contribute in a meaningful way, vocational options are seen as viable and valuable. College for those who want to pursue higher education. Confidence that they can succeed in friendships, intimate relationships, and work environment.”

“Literate, high emotional quotient, critical thinker, collaborative, tech savvy”

“Kindness, empathy and self assurance. I want her to see herself as a world citizen and have the confidence to make the world a better place.”

“Skilled writers Reading comprehension Critical thinkers Self motivated Curious Math competent Work force ready Understand sciences Exposed to arts Aware of self and differences with others”

  
 EVERY STUDENT  
 DESERVES THE SUCCESS

### **PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE: REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES**

"Kind, curious, hard workers who have a firm grasp of reading, writing, spelling, history, math, science, and the arts so that they are prepared for any field of work ( not just technology)"

"Students that are able to make wise, responsible decisions. Are socially, and knowledgeable individuals who can be independent members of society."

"Self confidence self motivation  
self sufficient"

"integrity, academic drive and curiosity, ability to collaborate and synthesize their learning with that of others, real world applications"

"The ability to express self and communicate ideas, written & verbally."

## Online Survey Results

### **STRENGTHS of Gresham-Barlow School District**

"There are some excellent teachers and staff that respect their students and use their position to encourage the students to be free thinking and open"

"The majority of all staff (custodians to principals) really care are about each student as an individual. Overall we all do amazing work with the resources we have."

"The district does a better job of teaching students than the Oregon average, but far below what I expect. Teachers need to be trained to have good global view."

"Diverse district of multiple cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Quality schools turning out success bound graduates."

"Communication with parents, a safe place to learn"



### STRENGTHS of Gresham-Barlow School District Cont..

"I think the school does well with the budget that it has. I like all the teachers and what they bring to my daughter. I believe they are getting her ready for college."

"Communication School culture Teacher student relationships"

"We are working in the right directions and this is an exciting time in the district"

"The district is making an effort to improve."

"It is beyond your control that Oregon does not fund schools adequately. You are good stewards of the money you get, which isn't enough for you."

"Great positive environment"

## Online Survey Results

### AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT for Gresham-Barlow School District

"Commitment to children of all races to a quality education. Ability to deal with open racism in an effective manner."

"Weakness - uninspired teaching using "one size fits all" modalities. No innovation especially for special needs students."

"We need to move away from expecting all kids to fit in "the box" and be more active in supporting adults to provide out of the box ideas especially for kids that struggle to learn in traditional styles. All schools are not equal. Schools need to be supported in equitable not equal ways. Also mental health needs to be supported in the curriculum"

"Closing gaps, getting kids that are struggling help and to challenge the kids that excel. I feel there is too much mainstream, teachings for the mass."

"Needs more choices"





### AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT for Gresham-Barlow School District

"Creating social emotion supports for all students and providing intervention prior to becoming a special education students. Working with specialists and collaborating across all staff. Mental health support in schools."

"Interventions are out dated"

"I think bullying needs to be paid more attention to"

"More diverse staff, more understanding to the cultures around them and the students in their school."

"Technology in the classrooms"

"Improve evaluation system so it is beneficial not punitive."

"Over crowding. Teachers are unprepared to deal with special needs students and behavioral issues"

## Online Survey Results

### In FIVE YEARS...Gresham-Barlow School District.....

"Be recognized state wide as an innovative and exceptional school district"

"Provide a relevant, effective, and positive learning environment for all students where each person is respected and valued for their contribution to the community."

"have one of the highest graduation rates in the state. Our students will regularly excel on state test scores. Our students will enjoy going to school and be proud to be a GBSD student. The district will only employ staff that put students needs first. The district will provide resources necessary for all students; from those with learning disabilities all the way to those who excel academically."

"have a complete curriculum that teaches personal responsibility, independence, real life skills"

"Produce kids ready for a much wider variety of jibs and continuing education"



**In FIVE YEARS...Gresham-Barlow...continued**

"improve learning for all students and provide engagement to students that need extra encouragement."

"Be recognized state wide as an innovative and exceptional school district"

"GBSD will be a more accepting community to students and staff members."

"Serve ALL students of ALL abilities using their preferred learning style to create independent and lifelong learners discovering the nexus of knowledge and skill leading to success in any endeavor."

"In 5 years GBSD will have a school system where ALL students get the instruction and supports they need to be successful academically, socially, and emotionally. We will have curriculum that is guaranteed, viable, responsive, engaging, and future ready. We will have systems in place so that all instructional are integrated, communicating, and proactive. We will have systems everyone uses, are accountable for using, and are supported to use. We will engage community and families and the schools will belong to all and will be a place where everyone belongs. "



HANDOUT



**EVERY STUDENT**  
◊ **PREPARED FOR SUCCESS** ◊

# GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT: ACADEMIC AUDIT

Felicity Educational  
Services



October 25, 2017

Dear Gresham-Barlow School Board, Superintendent Perera, Principals, Teachers, Support Staff and Greater Gresham-Barlow Community:

Thank you for selecting Felicity Educational Services to conduct an Academic Audit for your District. The purpose of the visit was to assess academic programming and provide the district leadership with a third party assessment from which to calibrate support to schools and to provide recommendations for creating instructional coherence in alignment with the district's strategic goals and to further advance improvement efforts. The observers are independent, educational consultants with professional experience and expertise in teaching, school-based leadership, district leadership, professional development and strategic, organizational design.

Gresham-Barlow School District has a rich and positive tradition serving its surrounding communities. Despite the financial issues facing both the State of Oregon and the District, the community is proud of the efforts of the teachers, staff, administration and Board. These qualities became readily apparent throughout the academic audit process as every constituency reflected positively on the District. An incredibly impressive percent (85%) of survey respondents are proud or extremely proud to be a part of the of Gresham-Barlow School District community. This support and passion for students and schools should help propel the District to higher levels of success for all students and staff. The recent bond issue will greatly improve the facilities while the academic programs are poised to improve as well.

All stakeholders further demonstrated a sincere desire to help improve the District and provided specific details and unique insights. While there is considerable diversity of opinion, a number of common themes emerged from multiple sources. Online surveys, small group discussions, staff meetings and other fact finding all yielded great insights into and for the District. Hundreds of people actively participated in the process while District programs, documents and resources were researched and analyzed. In the end, this report was created to represent the community, school board, teachers, administrative personnel, support staff, community partners and private citizens. Our hope is that the information provided truly assists the District as it develops a strategic plan for ongoing growth and improvement.

## VISION

**Gresham-Barlow School District supports dynamic learning opportunities led by accomplished educators dedicated to creating environments where every student values learning and academic achievement while developing the skills and attributes necessary to be prepared for a lifetime of learning, career opportunities, and productive contributions to the community.**

## MISSION

**Every student prepared for a lifetime of learning, career opportunities, and productive contribution to the community.**

Sincerely,

Mike Nekritz  
CEO- Felicity Educational Services

## GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT- ACADEMIC AUDIT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Felicity Educational Services (FES) conducted an academic audit for the Gresham-Barlow School District. The research, extensive interviews, classroom walkthroughs, online surveys and dialogue with students provided a tremendous amount of insight, data, and unique perspectives on the District. FES found every District representative responsive to questions, generally enthusiastic to be participating in the audit and authentic when discussing the District. The online survey results, predominately completed by parents, also demonstrated the positive perception these community members feel about Gresham-Barlow.

**Strength:** In addition to a genuine desire to improve the experiences of students, FES found people to be honest about their likes and dislikes of District practices and protocols. This sincere, accurate, assessment of strengths and weakness, and the apparent willingness to improve set the stage for substantial growth. Staff understands the complex and difficult work of educating students of varying socio-economic situations and ethnicities. During classroom visits, students were engaged, positive and generally ready to learn. Traditionally, the District allowed substantial autonomy in buildings and classrooms so programs have grown organically. There are choices for students, especially for high school students, including an alternative setting (small environment), International Baccalaureate program and a tradition starting with Advanced Placement options. In many ways, Gresham-Barlow is on the cusp to become a great District for all students, with the administration, faculty and staff willing to perform the work necessary to achieve these lofty goals.

**Areas of Potential Growth:** Felicity Educational Services has identified the following areas that could help Gresham-Barlow School District improve.

**Unifying Vision,** core beliefs and focus to align the District: From a systems approach, growth and consistency would be realized by developing a clear and concise focus for all District employees.

**Curriculum:** Based on best practices, participant insight and research, classroom outcomes can be improved by defining "curriculum," establishing exemplar documents and protocols, and establishing a more robust accountability system for students and staff. Discussions should include:

- Guaranteed and viable curriculum
- Formative and common assessments
- Curriculum design consistency
- Vertical integration

**Technology:** With continued standardization of system hardware and robust broadband connectivity, the District could begin to shift technology focus to instructional technology. Efforts should be systemic and designed to infuse the use of technology into the curriculum. With the enormity of this task, it is difficult for "structure"/hardware-focused individuals or administrators, also responsible for teaching and learning, to lead.

## Other Opportunities:

- HR- Hiring, Attendance, On-boarding: Gresham-Barlow should consider reviewing human resource protocols and practices for efficiencies to allow some decisions on hiring to be localized and incentivize better staff attendance.
- Equity: With changing demographics, the District has begun working on issues related to equity and poverty. These early stages, while commendable, should be enhanced and systemized as much as possible to ensure positive change is occurring throughout the organization.
- Interventions: The extent of interventions in buildings is a school-by-school choice. With very limited interventions in high school, and few in math, the District should look to establishing District best practices and protocols. While there are successful pockets, the system is not as equipped as staff, parents and administrators would like.
- Leveraging new opportunities: The District should continue to examine the fidelity of current offerings (from a systems lens) and determine which programs at various schools are best for District students. Replicating successes across the District (like AVID, PBIS...) and creatively working on community resources, such as business partnerships and alternative options for students, could add substantial value to the educational experiences provided by Gresham-Barlow.

**Obstacles and Threats: With any organization or change process, obstacles to success exist. While these roadblocks can be overcome, consideration and planning must occur to avoid pitfalls. Please consider:**

- Initiative Fatigue: There have been a number of initiatives, and many of these improvement plans have not been sustained over time. Whether redone, ignored and replaced with new initiatives, the many initiatives have led to staff fatigue. Perhaps, in the future, this may mean fewer goals, more clear direction, appropriate metrics and a promise of a long-term commitment.
- Mistrust: As in any organization, there are groups at Gresham-Barlow that rightfully have competing priorities. Over time, these conflicts have manifested themselves in divergent thinking and some mistrust. Open and honest dialogue should continue to be valued. During negotiation times this can be more difficult. Another way to describe mistrust could be the problem of inertia: a mentality believes in the status quo and/or in outlasting this initiative/leadership.
- Skill: Some of the suggested areas to consider involve creating, developing, improving or rethinking some responsibilities. There will be areas of focus like technology, curriculum design or leadership where people will need some professional development, mentoring building capacity to enact on the change.
- Historical autonomy (versus consistency): The District has a tradition of local autonomy that can conflict with system consistency. Attention must be given to this dynamic.
- Mismanagement: Careful attention must be applied to the institutional process of change and accountability to ensure consistency and resiliency.

## HANDOUT

Confidential and Internal Draft

- Will: Unfortunately, in some instances initiatives and change will be threatened by people's unwillingness to change. While not a skill issue, this involves a true willingness to change behavior and empathize with people in different circumstances. The areas of poverty, equity and interventions are more likely to experience this reality.

This report of findings will serve to provide recommendations and commendations using a research-based diagnostic tied to the AdvancED Standards for Quality. These standards are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools/districts to achieve quality student performance results and organizational effectiveness. The indicators are operational definitions or descriptions of exemplary practices and processes. When seen together, the indicators provide a comprehensive picture of each of the standards. Supporting data is generated from site assessment results.

Gresham-Barlow school leaders and staff are committed to providing the best possible experiences for the students and community of the District. There are great teachers and high levels of learning throughout the District. At the same time, there are opportunities to create a more systems approach to the academic programs to ensure all students benefit from the efforts of all Gresham-Barlow employees.



## INTRODUCTION

This report presents Gresham-Barlow School District with an academic report. This document and corresponding findings are divided into clear sections so that the community can easily navigate the entirety of the document. Sections include:

- ❖ **Gresham-Barlow School District Background Information**
- ❖ **The Academic Audit**
  - **Background**
  - **Academic Audit Process**
  - **Standards Assessment- Analysis**
  - **Student Voice**
  - **Recommendations**
- ❖ **Administrator Survey Highlights**
- ❖ **Online Survey Results**
- ❖ **Public View of Gresham-Barlow**
- ❖ **Online Survey Results**
- ❖ **Administrator Survey**
- ❖ **Public Survey**
- ❖ **Appendices**



## ADVANCED AND S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

AdvancED is a trusted organization committed to aligning the work of schools and school districts to best practice standards. As part of the Academic Audit, Felicity Educational Services utilized aspects of the AdvancED Self Assessment. This tool was designed to create reflective conversations about the effectiveness of academic programs. The assessment is based on the five AdvancED Standards for Quality. Felicity Educational Services engaged teachers, staff members, administrators, the School Board and others to compare the practices, protocols and experiences at Gresham-Barlow to these Standards. Please see the AdvancEd website (<http://www.advanced.org>) for more details on the Assessment Tool.

Felicity Educational Services then takes this information, along with other research and observations, and performs a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis to more clearly explain findings and offer suggestions.



## GRESHAM-BARLOW BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gresham-Barlow is located outside of Portland, Oregon, and has been providing educational services for over a century. Gresham is the fourth largest city in Oregon with over 100,000 residents, while the District also includes populations from Boring, Damascus, and Orient. The community is diverse with nearly fifty languages spoken throughout the area. The District consists of eighteen schools: three high schools, four middle schools, ten elementary schools, and one k-8 building. In addition, there are four charter schools. A seven-member school board governs Gresham Barlow School District with Dr. Katrise Perera currently serving as the District's superintendent. Gresham-Barlow School District (the "District") serves well over 11,000 students.

### STATE OF THE DISTRICT

Gresham-Barlow School District performs near state averages in most published data on student achievement. The District has a proud history and has seen considerable demographic changes over the past decade. The community recently passed a substantial bond that will result in major capital improvements throughout the District. With infrastructure needing updates, this infusion will be incredibly positive for the school staff, students and community. While limited in its financial resources, with an operating budget of \$130,000,000, the District has maintained a high AA+ bond rating, spending \$10,870 per pupil, approximately 9% below state averages.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The Gresham-Barlow District is about 60% white with a large Hispanic/Latino population (about 27%). Other race/ethnicity groups comprise the remainder of the student body, with 3% black, 3% Asian, and 6% multi-racial. The District has a slightly above average population of students with disabilities (at about 15%) with a growing economically disadvantaged population (43% grades 9-12, 53% grades 6-8, and 83% grades K-5). The mobile student population is about 15% and Ever English Learners are about twenty-four percent of the student population. All of these demographic data points have been changing, resulting in new challenges for the District and staff. Attendance rates across the District are slightly below average with regular attendees at about 85% of the students from K-8 and only 68.3% at the high schools. Graduation rate is about 75% and the completion rate is slightly over 80%. Both are a few percent below state average.



Sixty-five percent of the budget flows from the State, with 27% local sources and 8% from the federal government. Oregon is suffering some funding and pension issues, causing considerable strain on the educational system. This has been the case for a good number of years. It is exciting to see that the community supported a much needed facility bond to improve the schools. If the implementation of this facility bond is seen as successful by the patrons, it will be possible in the

future for the district to ask the voters for a local option tax to address some critical areas that impact the way teachers educate their students. For example, the class sizes throughout the district are very high, particularly at the high schools. These class sizes make it very hard to individualize education for students and improve outcomes. A local option tax could help reduce class sizes, revitalize curriculum adoptions and infuse and improve instructional technology use in the district.

Much of this information was taken from the Oregon Report Card 2016-17. For a more detailed report on District information, please see the Public Profile sections of the report.



## THE STAFF

The District administration consists of one superintendent, who reports directly to the seven member School Board. Dr. Katrise Perera started her tenure only a few months ago. She has begun conversations to reduce the seven strategic goals to a more manageable number.

**Teaching Staff:** Gresham-Barlow currently has 1,120 staff members including fifteen Nationally Certified Teachers. The vast majority of the faculty (90%+) is white with limited number of minorities, and only three administrators are minorities. This past year over 50 teachers were hired. While there have been years with less turnover, this number has been relatively consistent over the years. Certain areas, like special education, have experienced greater turnover than other departments.

The Gresham-Barlow Education Association is considered an active and strong teacher association. The existing contract ended in July and negotiations are currently underway. Other employees (non-certified) in the district are members of the Oregon School Employees Association Chapter 8. This group recently signed a new contract with the School District that lasts through 2020.

**EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE, FEDERAL AND STATE:** Gresham-Barlow has successfully adjusted to a number of educational changes over the last decade: the passage the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a change in high stakes testing, movement aligned to the Common Core, a national push for STEM (and STEAM), and other efforts. The District utilizes the Oregon State Standards as a critical part of the curriculum. The District fares favorably on state assessments when compared to like-size school districts with similar demographics. Yet many students are not being successful in meeting or exceeding state benchmarks as measured by the Smarter Balance Assessment tool used by the state of Oregon. This is magnified in sub groups such as Hispanic and Black/African-American students.



The teacher evaluation process and forms follow state guidance and local the contract and utilize the work of Charlotte Danielson. This process involves substantial resources and time for all employees in the District.

## THE ACADEMIC AUDIT PROCESS

### ACADEMIC AUDIT ENGAGEMENT:

In September 2017, the District partnered with Felicity Educational Services, LLC (FES), a third-party consulting firm, to perform an academic audit documenting the current state of the District and determine potential future directions based on District and community stakeholder values as well as best practices in K-12 education. Engagement of stakeholders resulted in the creation of a report aligned to standards and communicated via a S.W.O.T. analysis. In all, over 400 stakeholders offered their insights via the online survey while hundreds of staff members and students also provided invaluable input throughout the process.



The audit process was designed to authentically engage stakeholders – including the Board of Education, administration, principals, students, parents, teachers, and staff– in articulating organizational values, beliefs and goals.

### STAGE ONE: RESEARCH

Felicity Educational Services engaged in a deep dive into District resources.

Resources included District data, information, policies and protocols including ,but not limited to:

Attendance, Budget, Climate Surveys, English Learner Program, Enrichment Program, Equity Program, Human Resources, Policies/Procedures, School Improvement Plans, SSSO, Teaching and Learning, the Curriculum, Curriculum-related documents, Technology, Thought Exchange information, and other relevant documents.



Group Meetings were held with various stakeholders throughout the week. The teams were representative of the District and included principals, District Office administrators, elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, special education representatives, ELL representatives,

## HANDOUT

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Title I/RTI representatives, Association leaders, District Finance Team, students and others. During these group sessions, participants engaged in dialogue around both the positives and areas of greatest needs at Gresham-Barlow. Conversations included the core responsibilities of the participants as well as District systems, protocols and procedures. In most groups, current practices were critically considered and evaluated. Once people had formulated and prioritized their individual ideas, they shared them in larger groups. These conversations ebbed and flowed around the ideas and passions of group participants. Throughout the process, conversations tended to converge upon a set of core ideas, and many times focus shifted away from personal agendas to a more comprehensive perspective on the student experience, providing evidence and anecdotes when appropriate.



**Interviews:** We had the pleasure to spend time with a good number of people in small settings. These one-on-one and two-on-one sessions covered many of the same topics as the group meetings but on a smaller scale. These occurred with School Board members, the Superintendent, Human Resources, and other District Office personnel. At the school site visits, opportunities for one-on-one conversations also occurred.



**Student Meetings** held during the school day at the high school, middle school, and elementary levels. Groups generally included 15-20 students per meeting. The student meetings followed the same format as the ones with the community, with a more concise focus on shared experiences rather than

process and protocols. When Felicity Educational Services personnel interacted with the students, we were impressed with the honest, direct, and generally positive participation from everyone. It is important to note that the students seemed generally happy with their experiences and genuinely excited to share with the Felicity Team. While generally positive, all groups provided constructive feedback.

**Surveys from District Leaders:** FES provided a written survey for District administrators and building principals. The surveys concentrated on the AdvancedED standards revolving around the academic program of the District. Fifteen responses were completed. These anonymous questionnaires provided further perspectives on programming, protocols and practices of the District.

HANDOUT

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Classroom Walkthroughs: Over the course of the week, FES conducted walkthroughs of classes at high, middle, and elementary schools. Seeing teaching and instruction in action augmented our research on classroom activities, instruction design/implementation, student engagement, and student/teacher behaviors.

DRAFT



### Analysis

Data for each instructional area was reviewed and analyzed. Based on many interviews, student enrollment trends, organizational alignment and staffing, resource allocation, student performance trends, major compliance requirements, and programmatic design and implementation, we provide the following analysis based on the AdvancED Assessment and consistent with a S.W.O.T. analysis.

**Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.**

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staff is committed to improvement and share core beliefs in the potential of all students regardless of circumstance or situation</li> <li>• General understanding of the vision for students success (at different buildings)</li> <li>• Students at every grade level are thinking about life after high school</li> <li>• Equity work has begun in earnest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven District Goals: These are not well known or communicated</li> <li>• No knowledge of how goals are or will be measured</li> <li>• Communication has not focused on a systems approach about teaching and learning</li> <li>• There is a limited sense of urgency around key beliefs and expectations- like attendance</li> </ul>
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of the number of goals and creation of true measures</li> <li>• Development of a new vision aligned to curricular/academic program will be welcomed by many</li> <li>• Communication and an implementation plan can create a shared sense of responsibility and accountability around an established focus</li> <li>• Creation of a sense of urgency around attendance and equity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiative fatigue</li> <li>• Staff concerns over too many goals may lead to frustrations</li> <li>• Inconsistent messaging</li> <li>• Will of staff to address District perspective</li> <li>• Skills may not be in place for some of this work dealing with equity, and poverty</li> </ul>

Gresham-Barlow has seven goals listed on its website as the strategic initiatives (see chart on right). While appropriate and important goals, the list is wide reaching and has limited descriptors or details to create a shared accountability. Dr. Perera has already begun to reduce the focus and create more detailed accountability measures. A new strategic plan will also provide an opportunity to recreate or tweak these strategic plans.

According to some principals, the vision is not a critical component of what principals do. There are parameters for school improvement plans but systems across the District are not fully developed. Building plans have much greater importance than District plans.

#### Strategic Themes

**Teaching and Learning, Growth and Achievement for All-** Engage every student in meaningful learning through high-quality accessible instruction and relevant content

**Equitable Outcomes** - Reduce the achievement gaps by supporting and sustaining equitable opportunities for every student

**College and Career Readiness** - Improve and increase high school pathways to college and career options

**Early Learning** - Align practices and resources to support all students reading at grade level by the end of the 3rd grade

**Class Size and Learning Environments** - Strive to strategically reduce class sizes and improve learning environments

**Community Partnerships** - Enhance support for students and schools through parent, business and community partnerships

**Community Investment** - Create a long-term prioritized plan for enhancing and preserving the community's facilities

Attendance is a real concern in the District for both students and staff. Chronic absences are too high at every grade level with teachers missing on average of over thirteen days per school year. A sense of urgency around this issue must exist. Improving attendance alone should result in substantial academic growth. This is not confined to Gresham-Barlow, but is a statewide problem. The District must better understand the choices that students and community members are making in regards to missing school.

From a District perspective, equity work has been highlighted as an area of need, especially more recently. While this is a point of pride for many, others believe this is moving too slowly, with limited impact in many areas. The online survey and state testing data clearly acknowledge the much-needed work that must occur in this area. Administrators, teachers, and students all shared this view, and many spoke passionately about necessary change. Some students openly admitted that they do not feel "fully a part" of the school because they are different. The importance of this issue cannot be understated and can be considered a threat to organizational success as well as an area of potential growth. There needs to be urgency around this work guided by a District Vision.

There is awareness of the issues across all stakeholders and an acknowledgement of the need to address inequities, but do the skills exist and is the system prepared? Developing and enacting an equity plan now that there is policy promoting equity would be the next major step. Establishing goals tied to metrics and creating greater coherence in approach could be more efficient than the different efforts happening at different places, with unmeasured fidelity or ROI. A systems approach can assist in eliminating barriers and developing effective leadership to create equity and inclusion for all students, especially students of color, second-language learners, low-income students, LGBTQ students and any subgroup suffering the effects of historical and institutional bias.

District programs like Federal Title assist a number of schools, although this has been reduced by two schools. The work has been challenging to integrate in the buildings. There appears to be some stigma attached to schools that have been chronically underperforming. In many ways the work with English language learners is similar. Some area experts referenced a stigma attached to the families involved and a general concern that the organization has not met the many needs of these students.

**Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an energy and enthusiasm displayed by administration and staff to be inclusive</li> <li>• Staff cares about students and wants to provide pathways for success for all students</li> <li>• Recent attempts to develop an equity lens when interviewing have been implemented</li> <li>• General openness to change at District office</li> <li>• Onboarding: some time was allocated for new teachers to have mentors and the District received mentoring grant through ODE</li> <li>• The recent bond approval will greatly enhance structure and climate of buildings</li> <li>• People feel District is a positive steward for and of community resources</li> <li>• Budget decisions for academics is in departments of people making academic decisions</li> <li>• Relationship with union is showing signs of improving</li> <li>• An “Open Door Policy” appeared to be the norm throughout the District when discussing or addressing concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity work - doing what is right- is complicated and hard to communicate</li> <li>• There are less options for students not concentrating on college</li> <li>• There is a teacher absence problem</li> <li>• Substitutes: well over \$200,000 a month is paid for substitutes</li> <li>• Decisions are sometimes made in silos or without District perspectives or systems thinking</li> <li>• Hiring practices can cause District-school rifts</li> <li>• There are tensions between the Association and District personnel</li> <li>• Historically difficult relationship with Association has created issues with building accountability around initiatives</li> <li>• Special Education’s transition to a new approach to managing IEP and workload is in a tenuous position</li> </ul>



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OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to hiring process to allow more local final decision making, increase efficiencies, and promote District goals</li> <li>• Examination of budget processes to elicit input and ownership of resources allotted to academic programming and staffing</li> <li>• Creating attendance incentives</li> <li>• Increase public relations and communication around core activities</li> <li>• Examine possibilities to increase opportunities for all students</li> <li>• Create shared mentoring program with Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with Association and the grievance process</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Chronic Absenteeism</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• A school v. system tension</li> </ul>

Gresham-Barlow School District should be proud of the positive and enthusiastic nature of its staff. While the normal grumblings about the difficulties facing educators were shared, there was much more focus on the possibilities that exist for the District. This determination, combined with a vision and plan for success, could catapult the District to greatness. Dr. Perera's commitment to hearing all different perspectives is a step in the right direction.

When discussing the District, school board members understand and accept that change would be occurring to ensure that the District meets its obligations to the community. While supportive of the academic programs, the Board has been concentrating more on the financial complexities facing all schools in Oregon. Members of the Board now feel that attention can be focused on other issues, particularly the academic programs. The use of assessments, for example, is an area that could more effectively evaluate the success of the curriculum. With changing demographics, Board Members are cognizant of equity issues and recognize that there are obstacles for growth in this area.

Reflecting on past experience, one Board Member believes the Board is finding its way after a time when accountability was not where it should have been. While the District is proud of the options and access for kids, more can be done to reduce the compliance mentality and creatively work to improve the academic program. A District systems approach towards instructional technology, assessments, social-emotional supports and curriculum would be beneficial. Members recognize that relationships with the Association could be better.

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Some of the great work that is done at the buildings and by the District falls under the radar and fails to receive the attention of other staff and the community. There are many pockets of excellence that could and should be recognized. A few specific teachers with amazing technology abilities, for example, were mentioned. The group did not know why these instructors' stories and abilities have not been leveraged.

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an energy and enthusiasm about the adoption of the new math curriculum (elementary/middle school)</li> <li>• Online resources exist for teachers</li> <li>• Time (Wednesday) is devoted to use of data and assessments in all buildings</li> <li>• General openness to improving the system and creating additional structures (most administration, principals, teachers, association representatives involved in discussions)</li> <li>• General understanding and acceptance of Oregon State Standards</li> <li>• Students are generally happy in school, and the community is supportive of the efforts of staff in this area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited number of exemplars in curriculum, assessment practices (formative), and data usage</li> <li>• Lack of shared systemic definitions (and practice) of guaranteed and viable curriculum, curricular design, and use of assessments</li> <li>• There is no adherence to systemic protocols or practices around use of time on data, assessment</li> <li>• There are less option for students not focused on attending college</li> <li>• Technology is driven by infrastructure and hardware needs and not instructional technology needs</li> <li>• There is a substantial student attendance problem</li> <li>• Class sizes are high</li> <li>• Social-emotional skills, character education not consistent in curriculum design or implementation</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase opportunities for students based on their interests (alternative paths)</li> <li>• Increase focus on instructional technology</li> <li>• Establish systemic definitions, practices,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of consistency in most subject areas</li> <li>• Current curricular inertia</li> <li>• Historically autonomous perspectives of buildings and staff</li> </ul>

and protocols for curriculum design and execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly defined systemic practices, and protocols for teacher and building meetings on date (a shared agenda?)</li> <li>Increase opportunities for vertical alignment</li> <li>Create potential “life cycles” for students through K-12</li> <li>Better documentation and communication of success stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with Association and the grievance process</li> <li>Organization of District documents</li> <li>Accountability measures not managed effectively</li> <li>Resources and training</li> </ul>
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Teachers and administrators share a passion for instruction, and the walkthroughs conducted throughout the district generally demonstrated lively, engaged classrooms. In one building several grade level classrooms and teachers were working on the same story/text. The principal explained that this was a school-driven plan to have a unified curriculum so that teachers can easily share resources. This same mentality or experience was not a focus witnessed at other buildings. The principal lauded his teachers for their collective work. In many ways this is a model that we would recommend to the District.

Developing a shared definition of curriculum would be a start of a systems approach. For many, the Common Core State Standards are referred to as curriculum; for others these standards represent the skills student should have, not the curriculum. It is evident that the District is standards-based (this is a good thing), but curriculum is different things to many different people. The Google Drive, where resources are shared, contains a ton of relevant information but is difficult to follow and inconsistent in quality and utilization. A new teacher, for example, may very well have to access three different folders to see standards, unit plans, and other class-related resources.

A few principals identified some content teams that had created solid curricula worth sharing, but explained that it was only at their schools; drive and not accessible to others. The extent to which people were comfortable developing curriculum varied greatly from lacking any experience to fully confident and competent. Sadly, middle school students heard many teachers complaining about the curriculum and not having the time to fully understand of the curriculum. While this may have been an “off the cuff” statement from staff members, it was vivid in the minds of the students.

In addition to consistency issues, curriculum has not been shared vertically across grade levels or horizontally across schools. Principals (and others) struggled to explain common K-12 pathways students might be experiencing throughout their tenure at Gresham-Barlow.

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Based on discussions with students and staff, the following questions may be useful to examine:

- Are grading and reporting based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses?
- How do we define a successful student? Course?
- How do we best ensure that new (or any) teachers are adequately prepared to teach the curriculum as presented?
- What percent of the curriculum should be guaranteed and/or viable?
- How can we best share best practices and implement common formative assessments?

**Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.**

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The successful passing of the facility bond!</li> <li>• Financial difficulties due to state budget problems have been managed well</li> <li>• While high, class sizes have been consistent during tumultuous times</li> <li>• Recent curricular adoptions have occurred</li> <li>• When resources have been available, programs have been brought back (middle school basketball)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class sizes are large</li> <li>• Intervention programs are inconsistent or lacking in certain areas</li> <li>• Special education is going through large transition</li> <li>• Minimal social-emotional supports for students</li> <li>• Curricular focus has been on the core; less on social-emotional aspects of education</li> </ul>
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce goals and provide true focus</li> <li>• Establish best practice for District regarding academic interventions</li> <li>• Establish best practice for District regarding behavioral interventions (PBIS)</li> <li>• Increase attention to student voice</li> <li>• Greater administrative presence in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued inconsistent approaches to interventions</li> <li>• Historically autonomous perspectives of buildings and staff</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Skills need to be more developed</li> <li>• Adherence to traditional teaching and</li> </ul>

classrooms	student management techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative time dedicated to non-instructional tasks</li> </ul>
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financial resources at Gresham-Barlow, and the rest of the state of Oregon for that matter, continue to be scarce and efforts by the business office center on maintaining the status and efficiency. There have been some large purchases, like the recent math curriculum, and smaller improvements like reinstituting basketball at the middle school. Movement on large-scale interventions or counseling programs continues to be a challenge. In the absence of a District-wide approach, schools create silos of interventions and programs providing additional supports for students. These opportunities are more limited and isolated than ideal.

Real financial limitations for the District result in large class sizes, especially in the high school. Despite changes in funding and pension concerns, the class sizes, while high, have remained constant for the past few years. Fortunately, this may be the first year in quite some time where buildings will have the ability to carry over some of their budgets. Perhaps this would be an opportunity to leverage existing school budgets to attack a systems concern, for instance, interventions.

While the amount of resources has been relatively consistent for the Special Education Department, demands on resources, human capital, and responsibilities have undergone substantive change. While the goals of increased efficiencies, reduction of paperwork for teachers, and the ability to develop stronger relationships with students are admirable, there is a lot of uncertainty about their success. The transition is new, and many feel that there was not much discussion or preparation done with teachers and local administrators. Some applaud the attempt; while others worry that the impact on the classrooms will be negative. With inconsistent interventions and RtI across the District, students and teachers can remain in limbo. There are always questions about which students need interventions first, which interventions are best, and how this work is coordinated. The Special Education changes have exacerbated these concerns for many.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive Assessment System that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The District has robust assessment tools from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices not effectively shared</li> </ul>

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<p>Smarter Balance to DIBELS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources on the Google Drive are available to all teachers</li> <li>Relationships help teachers improve (and principals believe this is occurring)</li> <li>There are many pockets of success at individual schools</li> <li>All teachers are evaluated as prescribed by law and contract</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills may not match expectations</li> <li>Assessments (formative) have not been a District-led focus</li> <li>Too many initiatives not measured for success</li> <li>Evaluation is not based on continuous improvement</li> <li>There is a shared belief that the current evaluation system is not effective for improving instruction</li> <li>Are successes the result of individuals or programs? What is replicatable is unknown</li> </ul>
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce goals and provide accurate measures</li> <li>A new aligned vision for curricular/academic program will be welcomed by many</li> <li>Communication and an implementation plan can create a shared sense of responsibility and accountability around an established focus</li> <li>Examine creative solutions for teacher observations and evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of a continuous improvement model</li> <li>Historically autonomous perspectives of buildings and staff</li> <li>Relationship with Association and the grievance process</li> <li>Time</li> <li>Limitations and processes in contract</li> </ul>

The systemic assessment program at Gresham-Barlow really revolves around state testing and the use of DIBELS at the elementary level. The data and results from state tests do not generate formative data that assists in instruction, re-teaching, and specific interventions or enhancements for students. School improvement plans drive the work of the teachers around instruction and assessment.

While there are pockets of the use of formative assessments, it is not common throughout the District. Some schools have worked hard to align grade-level instruction and assessments but this is localized. Data is not strategically shared.

There is Wednesday in-service time available to schools to varying degrees (principals use time differently) and teachers/teacher cadres are expected to review key data. While this may be the case in some schools and situations, there are no established District-wide protocols and

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accountability practices. Best practices are not shared, and work from meetings is not recorded in a manner that can be tracked or utilized by others.

While all staff is evaluated and data is a component of the process, few people believe that instruction is improved by any formal evaluation. Only one principal truly believed teachers were developing as a result of the contractual evaluation plan. No teachers and no administrators weighed in positively regarding evaluation either. Unfortunately, massive amounts of time, (especially principals' time), energy, and resources are utilized. How can this time be used more effectively? For example, there are much better coaching opportunities created for school leaders and peers to help develop instructional strategies and teaching craft. Principals and teachers alike believe that positive relationships strengthen skills, so perhaps conversations with the association and administration should focus on developing a shared belief in continuous improvement.

Instructional coaches, mostly financed through Title Federal Programs, are monitoring/supporting buildings. This group appears to have a better sense of instruction data, but best practices have not been replicated or shared.

The student group most likely impacted by a limited effectiveness of the continuous improvement model at Gresham-Barlow is the most at-risk students. The needs of students of poverty and different ethnicities are challenging, and not enough evidence demonstrates the District is totally equipped to address these. One administrator shared: "High gentrification, shift in poverty and diversity and property values have driven folks out and changed the complexion of the district students and families - we haven't been equipped to address this." When there is training to address this issue, a plan to scale it for an entire building has not been developed fully.

**STUDENT VOICE:**

It is important that we share some of the key findings and insights of the groups of students who participated in the discussions. The District should be proud of their honest, articulate and meaningful feedback.

**High School:** The high school students at both Gresham and Barlow had similar comments regarding their educational experience. Many seemed a bit frustrated with the large class sizes, access to counselors and other academic services, and lack of general accountability. A few commented they feel like they are discouraged from reporting issues while others felt that diversity, inclusion and equity are inconsistent across the building and among teachers. Some teachers will address issues immediately while others will not engage at all. (The cheerleaders and football students who took a knee represent a recent example). Many felt that they should have more input into what goes on in school and receive better communication about many items.

Another theme that resonated with the group was a desire to be exposed to more of the outside world. The traditional school model does not provide this for many of them.

Fortunately, the students did feel a connection to the school and believed that many of the teachers were helping them prepare for life after high school.

**Middle School:** The middle school students were equally excellent at sharing their thoughts and providing examples of their personal experiences. While generally content, most of the students expressed that they were generally bored throughout their average day (about 65% of the time). Only two of the students could share anything that they learned that was interesting to them from the day.

The group cited classes that did the same things each and every day, especially in math. Their favorite classes generally included instruction that varied its activities and teachers who really got to know them. AVID, math, language arts, and science were mentioned as favorites. The student group wanted more depth over quantity and referenced frustrations with the speed with which topics are covered rather than a greater level of inquiry. All were also in favor of more technology utilization in the classroom.

The minority students shared that they did not feel a full part of the school. All students, however, talk about going to college, although only a few shared their personal dreams with any staff members.

A few unfortunate observations:

- 2 of 16 like to read, with the groups generally agreeing that students develop less interest in reading in 5-6 grade
- Only 20% of the students heard praise today, while 50% could not remember the last time they were praised
- Students had heard teachers complaining about new curriculum and the difficulties of teaching (This was in science)

A positive observation from the students: The grading across classes was generally consistent and followed standards. This is a specific school improvement goal that they seemed to know and appreciate.



**Elementary School:** The elementary students were eager participants and incredibly excited to share their experiences. They truly enjoy school. The favorite activities revolve around variety. They like the “daily 5,” math groups when using tablets and computers, and reading stations. More time with technology would be preferred, and math was the favorite for half the kids (something happens in math between elementary and middle school). Journeys was only okay with repetitive and lower interest stories.

From a cultural and climate lens, 66% thought school was really fun, knew PBIS, and felt if they made mistakes they got a new opportunity.

Students felt frustrations with the amount of substitutes they have and the problems that occur in class when students do not listen or teachers cannot control the class. About 75% of the group had not talked about college or post-secondary plans, and students struggled to describe something interesting they learned today.

Unfortunately, about 50% of the students did not remember the last time they were complimented by a teacher, while more than 50% remembered the last praise they received was from a peer/friend. A few did have vivid recollections of the recent compliments they received from a teacher.

#### STUDENT VOICE ABSENT:

One of the major issues facing this school district and many in the state of Oregon is the low attendance rate or the high rate of chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism in Oregon is in the national spotlight, because it has the unfortunate distinction of having one of the highest levels of chronic absenteeism in the nation. Gresham-Barlow is no exception. It was a bit surprising that one of accomplishments that was celebrated at the beginning of the year at Barlow High School was that overall attendance rate was 75%. This means that 25% of the students were chronically absent. The district as a whole had 20% of their entire student population considered chronically absent during the 2016-17 school year. Why are these students not attending school?

Solutions that might be implemented to improve academic performance are doomed to failure if the district can't get 25% of their population to attend school regularly.

(A recent article on Oregon Chronic Absenteeism)

[http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2017/10/oregons\\_chronic\\_absenteeism\\_pr.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2017/10/oregons_chronic_absenteeism_pr.html)

## RECOMMENDATIONS: THE FOLLOWING EXPLAIN IN MORE DETAIL THE POSSIBLE AREAS FOR ONGOING GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT

An Important Reminder: Gresham Barlow School District is being successful for students and provides an education for which most in the community are proud. While not broken, the District could be GREAT for students and staff. Our recommendations offer possible directions that the District can seriously consider as it strives to realize its mission: **Every student prepared for a lifetime of learning, career opportunities, and productive contribution to the community.**

- ❖ Further Alignment of District and School goals, improvement plans, best practices, and more: A systems approach

**Systems Thinking:** We recommend developing a common understanding of systems that ensures that school and District practices and protocols are accountable to District norms. While there are historical and appropriate reasons for autonomy at schools and in classrooms, this belief permeates too much of current practice. Best practices, District needs, and other factors make consistency more important than autonomy at this juncture. Creative practices and adjustments to meet the needs of local students should continue, but alignment of goals (SIPs), curriculum (guaranteed and viable), interventions (best practices), instructional technology, and more ensures an equal and quality education for all students.

**Initiative Fatigue - Less is More:** We recommend focusing on a small core sets of beliefs and aligning all growth and improvement efforts to this core. We further hope that this focus will remain in place for the foreseeable future without too much deviation. Any changes or shifts should be related to systemic focus, and new initiatives should go through a very rigorous process before impacting the organization. If this resonates with all parties, even existing programs that do not relate to the strategic items should be vetted for effectiveness and fit.

- ❖ Defining Curriculum and Curricular Consistency Between Schools

There lacks a clear and consistent definition across the District regarding 'curriculum'. The term is used by many as synonymous to standards and by others as up to the discretion of the teacher. This is a problem that should be addressed. Other important instructional terms and teaching expectations for utilization must also be clearly defined and described. Both internal and external stakeholders expressed a desire to have certain commonalities within and among district schools. Suggestions included having common courseware, common curriculum experiences, and common outcomes across courses, departments, and schools. We are not suggesting that classroom autonomy disappears or teachers' instructional strategies are predetermined, but believe the District would improve with more consistency of curriculum, standard curricular

designs (using approved exemplars), and a system to better share teacher resources (unit plans, formative assessments, etc.). Students that require extra attention or unique approaches would receive the individualized instruction and opportunities to meet their needs. We recommend that the District determine what an ideal curriculum looks like and create exemplars for all course and grade levels. The templates and processes from *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe may be a good option to consider. **Curriculum must also include more than standards skill development. Recommendations to include more in the curriculum continue below.**

❖ **Continued Commitment to Good Instruction - Variety of teaching techniques, student-centered, SEL-related, empathetic, and tied to assessment**

Teaching and learning remain the primary focus of every school system in the country, and Gresham-Barlow is no exception. The students interviewed quickly explained that school was more enjoyable with a variety of activities, instructional techniques, and depth of learning. Too many students were bored more often than not, in large part because class was predictable and passive. Even the elementary students referred to variety in the “daily five” as the best part of the day. Middle school students talk about wanting more depth in classes, enjoying classes that combine their interests with classroom activities, and participating in lively discussions in which they can share their opinions. At the high school level, students had positive relationships with many teachers, but felt some teachers did not meet their needs.

**If the curriculum contains more SEL and technology, if instruction utilizes a variety of instructional techniques, and if staff demonstrates empathy for all student perspectives, classrooms will be more engaging and successful.**

**Assessment:** While testing is a key component of the educational landscape at Gresham-Barlow, the systemic use of common formative assessments to guide instruction is not nearly as robust. Pockets of success exist at some buildings, but there is no systemic manner to efficiently share best practices. As the District moves to a guaranteed and viable curriculum, the use of formative assessments should become a critical component.

**Evaluations:** According to all groups throughout the audit process, the current evaluation process in the District does not help develop teachers. This is a problem. Massive amounts of time, energy and resources are directed to evaluations. We recommend the the Association and District leaders creatively examine the evaluation plan and look for better methods to improve instruction and reduce the amount of wasted time. In addition to revisiting the evaluation plan, principals’ presence in classroom, informal observation cycles, walkthroughs, and peer evaluations may be topics to entertain.

### ❖ Equity – Developing the Equity Plan

**Equity Plan:** We recommend continuing the equity work that has been started in the District. While having a policy is a start, it is not enough to change practices throughout the organization. An true equity plan would be helpful to understand the difficult work ahead and provide goals and outcomes that can be measured to ascertain relative success and possible ongoing changes. Achievement gaps, parental surveys, student voice, teachers, and administrators all believe focus on equity is a pressing organizational issue. The next step is a heightened sense of urgency and an understanding of the extent that students are impacted.

### ❖ Interventions

As the nation struggles with the challenge of keeping our schools safe and creating success for all students, more time and energy must be focused on interventions for students, both academic and behavioral. While implementing interventions is in part a funding issue, a systemic approach to interventions must be developed. Currently, schools receive limited direction from the district regarding interventions. The District should examine which interventions work and then implement them consistently. Behaviorally, PBIS and restorative justice are working well at several schools although the level of fidelity to the programs is uncertain. A District approach would enable a better sharing of resources, best practices, training, accountability, and consistency. Academically, interventions are lacking, especially in math, as one matriculates through the system. No protocols are uniformly utilized to identify, prioritize or execute interventions.

### ❖ Increase Opportunities for All and Attendance

While there are opportunities for students like IB, AP, and Springwater Trail at the high school level, many students are still falling through the cracks. This is evident from the achievement gaps, high chronic truancy rates, dropout rates, and other school data at the high schools. The middle and elementary levels also have discouraging data. **There is a very real student and staff attendance problem.** To increase attendance, leverage student interests, and provide programs that meet students where they are at, the District should examine current program offerings and see if new or alternative programs would benefit them. AVID, for example, is successful at a number of buildings but not offered at others. Course offerings have not changed as much as student demographics, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills have not yet been integrated throughout the curriculum or grade levels. There may be opportunities to leverage the surrounding business communities to expose students to a variety of career pathways.

Attendance can and will be addressed with an increase in opportunities, access to a Guaranteed and Viable curriculum, attention to SEL, focus on equity, better use of technology, and establishing a sense of urgency for students, parents, guardians, and staff.

### ❖ Social-Emotional Experience

For a growing number of schools and districts, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and meeting the social-emotional needs of students has become a framework for how educators, families, and communities partner to promote students' social, emotional, and academic learning. While maintaining a keen focus on academics and consistently working to outperform local, regional and national standards, SEL allows a district to consider the whole student and the various demands placed upon students. This is consistent with our findings and the community survey. Teachers and other staff members must be keenly aware and empathetic to student perspectives. The student interviews show there is room for growth in making students feel comfortable, appreciated and understood. **Character education and social-emotional skills should be better interwoven into the core curriculum. Without a shift in thinking, the District will continue to not meet the needs of students.** For example, classrooms may focus on understanding diversity, working collaboratively with peers, treating other well, and communicating effectively. Standard District practices, increased training, highlighting work ethic, and increasing opportunities for all (like interventions, and alternative programs) would augment the work currently being done.

### ❖ Technology

There is a real opportunity to shift the focus of technology at Gresham-Barlow to instructional technologies, with the primary focus becoming integrating technology with instruction and curriculum. **Right now, instructional technology is secondary and this is not good for students.** If this leadership fell to the current teaching and learning group, there may be some capacity problems. Until now, the major focus has been on structures, hardware, connectivity, and equity of computer distribution. Perhaps there are opportunities to leverage a few identified technology rock-star teachers to help develop a technology instructional plan. Part of the work with technology must be to leverage teachers who are already utilizing new resources. These first movers could expose colleagues to new instructional strategies, train others on the use of technology, and incentivize others to take instructional risks. Students could be involved by offering constructive feedback. The Audit confirmed students are eager for this transition. The organization must recognize and reward any new attempts at utilizing technology regardless of the outcome, as long as professionals receive feedback and opportunities for future growth.

Currently there is not a digital citizenship profile or agreement on the use of personal devices in the classroom. However, teachers involved with technology grants and assisting others with technology would like to see personal devices used for instruction, formative assessments, and accessing information. Consideration should be given to the development of an instructional technology plan for the District. Obviously, conversations around equity, behaviors, and impact on culture/climate must occur. The conversations should begin in earnest.

### ❖ Human Resources and the Business Office:

Hiring Practices: While buildings are frustrated when their top choices for openings are not selected, the District office is equally frustrated that some top candidates do not end up

having appropriate certification or references. The business office correctly questions the number of substitutes needed for the interviewing process (up to seven per opening), and across buildings, no coordinated effort shares information about candidates. We recommend reversing some of the hiring practices. Perhaps the District office could develop an acceptable pool of candidates (credentialed, passed reference checks, etc.) that are then passed to the schools. Buildings, in turn, could interview two to three candidates and make the final selection from the previously approved list. All schools would have equal access to this list. We recommend that special education hirings are done in a similar manner with final decisions made at the school. Costs associated with the hiring process would be reduced by over 50% under this situation.

Hiring Plan Aligned to Other Key Initiatives: Human Resources must look to hire a staff that more closely resembles its student population and understands (and empathizes with) poverty and equity. This work has begun and should remain at the forefront of hiring decisions. In addition, some effort should be made to create a mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers. A trend to have mentoring programs jointly led and supported by the association and administration would be a win-win at Gresham-Barlow.

Identifying Needs: A staffing assessment of the District needs should be an ongoing process: identifying potential needs before the budget process and looking at year-over-year trends, retirements, and natural turnover rates. Updated marketing materials highlighting the District, the staff, and the students could be made available to all prospective candidates, universities, and the community.

Work Process: We recommend human resources begin proactively developing relationships with the universities throughout the state. This network is crucial to help gain access to the best and most diverse teacher candidate pool. This work should begin as soon as possible and certainly well before the traditional spring hiring process is underway.

Attendance: The District should examine methods to encourage and incentivize staff attendance. From a communication perspective, the District must stress the importance of attendance as an expectation and promote teachers who exemplify this behavior at both the building and District level. Staff recognition, website stories and other communication tools should highlight perfect or near-perfect attendance. From a financial perspective, the business office may want to consider purchasing unused sick and personal leave days at the end of the year at costs below the substitute pay scale. This win-win arrangement may have a positive effect for everyone.

Budgeting: Given the complexities of budgeting and communicating choices made throughout the budgeting process, we recommend beginning discussions about site-based or student-based budgeting. While there may be no change in the budgeting process, these discussions help force critical decisions and conversations about priorities to administrators (principals primarily) throughout the organization as opposed to confining them to the business office. Principals and business office personnel seemed open to this opportunity. Minimally, edification about budgets and the budgeting process should occur. We also see value in trying to enhance transparency by following through on a business office goal of having a website devoted to budgeting. Simple marketing materials offering insights into the



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budget process as it pertains to academic programming, staffing, and state regulations could add clarity.

**ESTABLISH A THEORY OF ACTION:**

Based on discussion and research, a starting point for a theory of action is below:

If all improvement efforts are strategically aligned to improve delivery of effective, high quality, and rigorous instruction... **And**, If we as a district collectively engage in the implementation of efforts to create organizational coherence around **Accountability, Teaching and Learning, Teacher and Leader capacity building and Organizational Development...** **And**, If we create the systems, build capacity, monitor, support, and provide feedback on educator performance,

**Then**, each student will be provided a high quality education (diploma) that prepares him or her to be successful in college and career choices.



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**ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEYS:** The following are highlights and themes from the surveys completed by District and school administrators:

We can improve the most:

- Interventions, alternative options for students who struggle in traditional setting (Math does not have interventions)
- We need to develop the capacity of our teaching staff to utilize technology to modify and refine instruction
- The district has not implemented many of its initiatives
- Increase alignment and support transitions from elementary to middle to high school

The District maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

- We should improve our consistency with the use of unit plans
- We need to be more specific about our systems toward our themes
- The strategic goals are “not a driver of the what and why at the building level as we conduct and guide professional development”
- We still struggle with the decision-making and focus

The District’s curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

- Adoptions have been long time coming, for example, the same science text from 2001 and social studies shortly after that
- A coherent system with accountability measures across the board is lacking
- Efficiency is building dependent
- Provide more meaningful access to core content, particularly at the secondary level, via increase scaffolding of content, high student active engagement and clear, high expectations for every learner

The District provides a rigorous curriculum, appropriate interventions, and opportunities for all students.

- Not all students have equitable opportunities to participate in elective classes
- For students that have significant academic/or behavioral needs we have a limited range of choices for helping them
- We do not teach math the way research shows is most effective.

The District understands and effectively addresses issues revolving around equity, poverty,



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character education, and social-emotional development.

- We need to identify a focus and have a district-wide system of approach on these issues

The District implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

- Assessment practices are completely disconnected from teaching and learning, have no input or feedback from building administration and lack congruency. Past attempts have not been successful (ACTIVE)...“without a clear guideline for instruction and assessment, building admin do not have a foundation to evaluate teachers effectiveness...”
- Inconsistent commitment to curriculum, instruction and assessment practices

DRAFT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ONLINE SURVEY

As part of the academic audit process, an online survey was available for community members during the month of October. As part of this survey, participants were asked to provide their personal perspectives on a host of issues, primarily revolving around teaching and learning and academic expectations and experiences. In addition, respondents described the crucial characteristics of a District graduate, district strengths, areas of concerns, and a vision for the future. Emerging themes and highlights included:

- ❖ Community members are generally very proud of Gresham-Barlow School District
- ❖ Interventions and Social-Emotional Learning are areas of concern
- ❖ Equity of opportunity and access for all students is a worthy goal for the District
- ❖ Ensuring that students are prepared for the next year should be a focus
- ❖ The District is a safe place for students

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A GRESHAM-BARLOW GRADUATE

Survey respondents offered some interesting insights into the characteristics Gresham-Barlow students should possess upon their matriculation.

From the hundreds of suggestions about the characteristics of a District graduate, trends emerged centering on core values exemplifying what is best in people. Softer personal skills dominated the responses while academic achievement items were secondary in the number of responses. The community expects graduates to be compassionate/empathetic, independent, resilient, and disciplined thinkers of exceptional character (integrity). Graduates should be college and career ready, have exemplary writing skills, and be passionate readers and financially literate. See below for a few representative comments.

"Confident. Self determined. Compassionate. Curious. Kind. Inspired. Inclusive. Seeking justice. Willing to take chances. Creative. Experienced with challenges."

"A graduate is aware of the needs within the community and the greater world. Has the tools to be a successful member of society. Kind, compassionate, full of integrity, and empathy."

"Ready for college or a vocation. Tech savvy, emotionally healthy to the degree possible considering family issues. Have ethics, integrity, social conscience."

"I would like students to possess skills such as critical thinking, personal organization and common sense. In addition, some notion of the incredible opportunities they have available to them being a citizen of this great country of ours, along with a tiny bit of pride/confidence. What I don't see being taught (and I think it ought to be) is self awareness, the importance of values and goals going into the future and how to assert themselves in achieving those goals."

"To be confident and educated enough to be competitive and to attend any college they would like."

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED REPORT FOR MORE INFORMATION.

## The Public View of Gresham-Barlow School District

The public can gain a great deal of information about the academic success and programming of school districts by accessing the websites of a state's department of education and individual districts and schools. Also, other sites, such as media outlets and non-profit groups, collect, analyze, and rank schools based on this information and make it easily available to the public. This report provides an overview of what the public would see and possibly conclude about academics at Gresham-Barlow School District from an examination of these electronic sources.

### State Testing Results

The easiest, and perhaps one of the most informative ways, for the public to understand the academic record of the Gresham-Barlow School District is to examine the results of the Oregon state tests. The district's website reports, "On Oregon's Statewide Assessment, students compare favorably with those from other districts of similar socio-economic make-up." (<http://www.gresham.k12.or.us>)

This report examines some of the results of state tests to appreciate students' academic achievement. For the 2014-15 school year Oregon transitioned to the Smarter Balanced assessments. Students are tested annually in English/language arts and math in grades 3-8 and 11. (Other tests are or can be given, but this report focuses only on ELA and math results.)

District and School Reports Cards detail these test results as well as other information. (The Oregon Department of Education website includes report cards and other district data: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx>)

The tables below show the Academic Achievement of the district's students in ELA and math for the 2014-15 and 2015-2016 school years. The percentages represent the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state grade level standards. In addition to district's scores, the tables include the percentages for students meeting and exceeding standards throughout the state and in like-districts. Like-districts share similar levels of low-income students, student mobility, and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students.

## Academic Achievement Math Results

Grade Levels	Gresham-Barlow 2014-15	Gresham-Barlow 2015-16	State	Like-District
3-5	36.2%	37.4%	44.9%	47.2%
6-8	34.1%	33.8%	42.8%	45.4%
11	29.3%	30.7%	34.2%	35.4%

## Academic Achievement ELA Results

Grade Levels	Gresham-Barlow 2014-15	Gresham-Barlow 2015-16	State	Like-District
3-5	44.5%	46.2%	52.4%	54.6%
6-8	54.7%	51.6%	56.7%	58.3%
11	77.5%	75.3%	70.0%	69.6%

Results indicate Gresham-Barlow falls below state and like-district Academic Achievement levels on ELA and math tests in all grades except 11<sup>th</sup>-grade ELA.

In addition to Academic Achievement, the state also reports on the Academic Growth of students based on its tests. Academic Growth measures student growth by comparing it to the "median growth percentile to represent 'typical' growth for each student group." Based on the median results for students in the tested grade levels, the state groups the Academic Growth results into five levels, with Level 5 representing the highest level of growth and Level 1 the lowest. Below are the district Academic Growth results in ELA and Math. The number for each grade level represents the growth rate, which places each grade in a level 1-5.

## Academic Growth Results for Math

Grade Levels	2014-15	2015-16	Combined	Level
3-5	50	48	49	3
6-8	50	48	49	3
11	48	41	44	3

## Academic Growth Results for ELA

Grade Levels	2014-15	2015-16	Combined	Level
3-5	51	49	50	4
6-8	59	49	49	4
11	61	53	58	4

The Academic Growth results show that district students are growing academically at average or slightly above rates, and that the growth is higher in ELA.

The public can also examine test results for particular schools. Such an examination reveals performance disparities among the 10 elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools. (The district's four charter schools are not included in this report.) For example, East Orient Elementary School, one of the district's highest performing elementary schools, dramatically outscores East Gresham Elementary School.

#### Math Results for Grades 3-5, Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Grade-Level Standards

Grade Level	State %	District %	East Orient %	East Gresham %
3	48%	40%	77%	20%
4	44%	37%	66%	29%
5	40%	33%	64%	9%

#### English Results for Grades 3-5, Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Grade-Level Standards

Grade Level	State %	District %	East Orient %	East Gresham %
3	47%	42%	73%	22%
4	50%	44%	65%	33%
5	57%	50%	74%	27%

The disparities narrow in middle school scores. The tables below compare two middle schools, Damascus and Clear Creek.

#### Math Results for Grades 6-8, Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Grade-Level Standards

Grade Level	State %	District %	Damascus %	Clear Creek %
6	39%	31%	53%	27%

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7	44%	34%	52%	26%
8	42%	34%	49%	26%

English Results for Grades 6-8, Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Grade-Level Standards

Grade Level	State %	District %	Damascus %	Clear Creek %
6	53%	48%	63%	44%
7	56%	49%	50%	38%
8	57%	55%	79%	48%

Among the three high schools, the disparity shrinks but continues. (Springwater Trail is a much smaller high school than the other two, with just over 175 students.)

Math Results for Grade 11, Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Grade-Level Standards

Grade Level	State %	District %	Gresham %	Barlow %	Springwater Trail
11	33%	30%	28%	34%	20%

English Results for Grade 11, Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Grade-Level Standards

Grade Level	State %	District %	Gresham %	Barlow %	Springwater Trail
11%	69%	75%	74%	80%	75%

The *Oregonian*/*OregonLive* (<http://schools.oregonlive.com>) offers another way to interpret the state test results. Although the state no longer compares schools and districts to each other, *Oregonian*/*OregonLive* used the proficiency and growth scores from the state tests to group schools into five levels: the very high level being the top 10%, the very low being the bottom 10%, and most schools being in the middle level. The grouping also compared schools with similar demographics.

Reporting on the same schools as above, the table presents the *Oregonian*/*OregonLive* ratings.

School	English Proficiency Differential and Level	Math Proficiency Differential and Level	English Growth and Level	Math Growth and Level
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East Orient Elementary	+3 Middle	+5 High	59 High	49 Middle
East Gresham Elementary	-10 Low	-11 Low	51 Middle	47 Middle
Damascus Middle	+14 High	+5 High	59 High	42 Low
Clear Creek	-8 Low	-11 Low	57 High	51 Middle
Gresham HS	+15 Very High	+2 Middle	72 Very High	54 Middle
Sam Barlow HS	+1 Middle	-14 Low	53 Middle	38 Low
Springwater Trail HS	+9 High	-19 Very Low	72 Very High	56 High

Another organization that reports on schools is Great Schools ([greatschools.org](https://greatschools.org)), which calls itself “the leading nonprofit” in providing “school information... to help millions of American families choose the right schools.” The organization primarily uses state test results, plus other public information, to create its rankings. In listing homes and describing communities, many real estate websites include information from Great Schools, which means it can shape the public’s perceptions of schools.

Great Schools reports on test scores, student progress, progress of low-income students, and, for high schools, college readiness. In each category, schools are rated 1-10: 1-3 denotes below average; 4-7, average; and 8-10, above average. For the Gresham-Barlow schools referenced above, this table shows Great Schools’ ratings.

School	Test Scores	Student Progress	Low Income	College Readiness (HS only)
East Orient Elementary	9	9	9	--
East Gresham Elementary	2	2	2	--
Damascus Middle	8	4	6	--
Clear Creek	3	5	2	--
Gresham HS	5	4	4	6
Sam Barlow HS	7	4	5	8

Springwater Trail HS	6	7	5	5
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Taken together, all of the various results for the schools can be confusing for non-educators to interpret. However, after examining the results for the different schools in the district, the public would likely conclude that academic achievement and growth differs, in some cases dramatically, among the district's schools—and, as a result, would likely pose several questions. What explains the disparity among the various schools? And, more important, what is the district doing to narrow and close these disparities?

### Education of Economically Disadvantaged Students and Underserved Races and Ethnic Groups

Two groups, the economically disadvantaged and Hispanic/Latinos, tend to do less well than the student population as a whole. Hispanics/Latinos are the only underserved race or ethnic group in the district that comprises more than 20% of the district's students, so this report focuses on their scores. Other underserved groups are all under 10%, and whites are about 60% of the district's students. The table below shows the Academic Achievement (those meeting or exceeding grade level standard) of all students, the economically disadvantaged, Hispanic/Latinos, and whites for the 2015-16 school year.

	ELA, Grades 1-3	ELA, 4-6	ELA, 11	Math, 1-3	Math, 4-6	Math, 11
All students	46.2%	51.6%	75.3%	37.4%	33.8%	30.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	42.9%	41.7%	64.7%	34.1%	23.5%	20.9%
Hispanic/Latino	27.2%	37.4%	63.1%	20.1%	19.3%	18.9%
White	55.1%	59.1%	79.5%	46.1%	40.4%	34.0%

### Freshman-on-Track, Graduation Rate, Percent of Students Pursuing Higher Education

The district's state card includes data on freshman-on-track for graduation, high school graduation rate both after four and five years, and percentage of students attending higher education after graduation.

#### Freshmen-on-Track for Graduation, 2014-15

District	State	Like Districts
75.5%	83.5%	85.4%

#### Graduation Rate Within Four Years, 2015-16

District	State	Like Districts
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73.6%	73.6%	76.0%
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#### Students Pursuing Higher Education, 2013-14

District	State	Like Districts
67.5%	59.4%	61.9%

The district has been working to improve its graduation rate.

### Academic Support for Students

The district is clearly dedicated to the success of all students: both the district's vision and mission statements emphasize that it seeks to prepare "every" student "for a lifetime of learning, career opportunities, and productive contributions to the community." The district's strategic plan focuses on seven themes, and the first two also express the district's goal to serve all students: Teaching and Learning, Growth for All, and Equitable Outcomes.

The district and school report cards list a number of programs created to help learners who may be struggling to achieve academic success. For instance, the SUN program: "SUN Community Schools are neighborhood hubs where the school and partners from across the community come together to mobilize and organize community resources at the local school to support children and families." (<https://multco.us/sun>) SUN offers after-school homework help and a summer program to assist students. In addition, schools have established a variety of academic interventions, including Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). AVID is a nationally recognized program "designed to prepare students in the middle who have not previously succeeded in a college preparatory path." (<http://www.avid.org>) At Gresham High School, "AVID elective teachers prepare students for rigorous academics by teaching organizational skills, time management, learning strategies, and discussion techniques. AVID students engage in tutorials twice each week with tutors who mentor them as they access content in their current courses." (Advanced Ed.- Executive Summary, Gresham High School, [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org))

The district offers a full range of special education services as well as several programs for English-as-a-second language learners and gifted and talented students. The high schools have Advanced Placement classes, an International Baccalaureate program, Career and Technical Education classes, and partnerships with local colleges that allow students to take high school classes that earn college credit. Sam Barlow High School, in particular, is proud of its Advanced Placement program, which was "recognized by the College Board through being placed on the Advanced Placement District Honor Roll." (Advanced Ed.- Executive Summary, Sam Barlow High School, [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org)) The public, though, lacks an easy way to investigate specifics about AP classes, such as what courses are offered at which schools, how many students take AP classes, and how well students score on these tests.

### Curriculum and Instructional Resources

The Curriculum Resources link on the district website states that the curriculum "supports teaching and learning practices that build critically literate thinkers." This part of the site includes links to the curriculum guides in the core content areas; however, only a few of these areas have accessible guides to the courses,

standards, and philosophy of the departments. Nearly all of the content areas require a password to access the content.

In the Instructional Resources area of the district website are brief descriptions of a number of initiatives, such as the college readiness program AVID and ACTIVE, a program to help teachers employ the most effective instructional strategies. Several of the links—for example, Assessment and Assessment Standards—lead the viewer to the state’s Department of Education website.

### Strategic Plan

As mentioned earlier, the district’s strategic plan, originally adapted in 2012, concentrates on seven themes. It’s unclear to what extent the plan still guides district efforts. The site does not mention specific ways the plan is being implemented or specific benchmarks to measure the plan’s implementation. The sites of the individual schools, though, do describe that school’s philosophy, goals, and programs to meet these goals and often refer to the district’s mission or vision. For example, on the website of East Orient Elementary School, the principal’s message announces his commitment to the school’s six educational initiatives, which are explained in detail in a link. (<http://eastorient.gresham.k12.or.us>) The principal of East Gresham Elementary describes her school’s commitment to shared ownership, to evidence-based quality instruction and assessment practices, and to data driven decisions. (<http://eges.gresham.k12.or.us>)

\*\*\*There have been recent efforts in the District to reduce the scope and number of goals outlined in the strategic plan.

The new superintendent, Dr. A.K. Perera, has announced a detailed “Transition & Entry Plan” to examine many aspects of the district, including its strategic plan. One of the plan’s goals is to “utilize gathered information from transition team to launch the tweaking and development of an efficient, effective, and strategic plan that will promote GBSD as a state and national leader in public education.”

### Conclusion

Parents and other stakeholders would find a welcoming tone and clear goals for academic improvement in the principals’ messages on individual schools’ websites. They might want to learn more, however, about particulars of current academic programs; for example, how well students are doing on other assessments beyond state tests, such as AP tests, and what specific courses are offered in different departments.

After examining publically accessible information on the academic success of Gresham-Barlow students, the public would likely conclude that the district does compare “favorably” to other schools in the state—if that means the students score close to the state and like-district averages for academic achievement and success.

Stakeholders, though, might be concerned about specific schools and/or about the disparity in academic achievement and growth among the district’s schools and for some underserved groups.

Finally, the district’s strategic plan concentrates on seven themes crucial to the success of the district, but it is not clear how strongly it guides current planning and decision-making. The new superintendent’s transition plan specifically addresses this concern and promises to offer clear directions for the future.

## PUBLIC SURVEY

### Gresham-Barlow Academic Survey

#### Community Engagement Survey

The Gresham-Barlow School Board engaged in a partnership with Felicity Educational Services (FES) to assist the district with an audit to ensure academic policies, protocols and practices are consistent with the district's and community's goals, values and vision. FES uses an objective, third party, research-based process that is designed to be inclusive, and gather data from multiple sources within the Gresham-Barlow community. We are hoping stakeholders will participate in our surveys to provide their unique experiences and perspectives on school climate, instruction and expectations. Students directly experience educational practices and offerings, while staff understands the complexities of instruction, the importance of curriculum and the impact of culture and climate. Parents, guardians and community members love their children and hope for nothing but the best for their kids. We hope to leverage all of these crucial perspectives to develop as comprehensive an academic audit as possible. Surveys assist greatly in this regard.

We are hopeful that participants openly share their thoughts throughout the survey and our audit process. We firmly believe that districts and schools are most successful when everyone is greatly respected and beliefs are valued/shared. Our process is designed to be reflective, collaborative and inclusive. We should all share in the goal to further strengthen the education of the students within the Gresham-Barlow community. To this end, please offer as much insight as you desire and feel free to skip any questions that are not applicable.

#### Stakeholder Questionnaire- Parent, Community Member, Student

Name (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Role (Parent, Student, Community Member, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ drop down choices

With which School do you most identify, if any?

I am proud to be a member of the Gresham-Barlow School District community (4 choices- SA, A, D, SD):

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Gresham-Barlow School District .....

Offers A Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum
Ensures That Every Classroom is Led by a High Quality Teacher
Implements Local, Regional and National Research on Best Instructional Practices
Effectively Evaluates Staff and Provides Opportunity for Growth and Improvement
Provides Consistent Learning Opportunities for Faculty and Staff
Proactively Communicates with Internal and External Stakeholders About Instruction and Curriculum
Keeps Students, Parents and the Community Informed on All District and School Issues
Leverages The Greater Community To Provide Additional Resources And Opportunities To Students
Provides Equity of Access and Opportunity to All Students
Provides Equity of Access and Opportunity to All Staff
Provides Equity of Access and Opportunity to All Community Members
Provides an Equal Quality of Education Between All Schools
Provides a Safe Environment for All Students, Both During School Hours and During Evening and Weekend Activities
Provides Appropriate Resources for Special Needs Students
Sets Very High Expectations for All Students
Offers Interventions for All Students Needing Assistance
Maintains Buildings Conducive to Learning
Integrates Content and Curriculum Across Courses
Integrates Content and Curriculum From Year To Year
Effectively Uses Instructional Technology in All Classrooms
Prepares Students with the Information Necessary to Make Good Decisions Regarding College and/or Career
Works Well With Other Local Organizations for Curricular Opportunities
Always has Students Prepared for Their Next Year
Makes Learning Fun
Develops Natural Curiosity
Aligns District and School Goals to Curriculum and to Professional Development
Has Standards and Protocols for Curriculum Development
Offers Opportunities to Explore Personal Academic Goals
Effectively Deals with the Social-emotional Needs of All Students
Is Successful Closing the Achievement Gaps for Minorities, Students of Poverty and Other Sub Groups
Holds Teachers Accountable
Is an Environment Where Staff Hold One Another Accountable
Is an Environment Where Teachers Share Best Practices, Their Personal Areas of Expertise and Work Product.

**Portrait of a Graduate:** Please describe the skills, traits and/or characteristics you would like students to possess upon graduation. In addition to standard academic descriptors, please consider a set of traits outside of traditional learning domains. (Please try to limit responses to 80 characters.)

**Strengths**

Please describe current Gresham-Barlow School District strengths, or positives.

**Areas for Improvement**

Please describe current Gresham-Barlow District areas in need of improvement, or perceived weaknesses.

**Vision for the Future:** Please, for a moment, fast-forward five years, and to describe how Gresham-Barlow School District looks if we were successful in implementing the strategies, programs and policies identified by the community.

In five years, Gresham-Barlow School District will:

## ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY:

Felicity Educational Services (FES) is excited to assist the Gresham-Barlow District with an academic audit to help ensure that future growth and goals align well with the District's current strengths and needs. We appreciate the open and honest dialogue we have already had with Gresham-Barlow staff and look forward to our future work.

FES was given your contact information (as a district leader) in order to help us better understanding your unique insights into the District. We value your input and hope you will complete this document as best you can. The information you provide will be kept confidential and will be utilized to help frame our discussions with other staff and community members. As you work through the questions, please remember your responses should focus on the academic aspects of the district.

What aspects of the 'academic program' Gresham-Barlow are you most proud of?

What aspects of the 'academic program' Gresham-Barlow can be improved the most?

### COMMENT, EVALUATE, AND PROVIDE EXEMPLARS (or non-examples):

- The District maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning
- The District operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.
- The District's curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.
- The District provides a rigorous curriculum, appropriate interventions, and opportunities for all students.
- The District understands and effectively addresses issues revolving around equity, poverty, character education, and social-emotional development.
- The District has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.
- The District implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.
- The district supports and regularly engages in inclusive practices that honor diversity of staff, students and families

**GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**1331 NW Eastman Parkway**  
**Gresham, OR 97030-3825**

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: A. Katrise Perera  
Kris Howatt

DATE: November 16

RE: No. 3 – Meeting Protocol

EXPLANATION: Time has been set-aside on tonight's meeting agenda for the purpose of reviewing routine board agenda presentation(s) for relevancy and effectiveness.

PRESENTER: Kris Howatt

SUPPLEMENTARY  
MATERIALS: None

RECOMMENDATION: This item is being provided for discussion only.

REQUESTED ACTION: No action is required at this time.

:sa