



Graham High School

Success Today, Prepared for Tomorrow





Graham Local Schools

“Home of the Falcons”

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

August
Superintendent Meetings
School Tours

September
Planning Kickoff Meeting

October
Community Survey

November
Forum with Seniors

December
Forum with Community

January
Forum with Administration

February
Planning Meetings

March
Planning Meetings

April
Plan Review

May

During the 2018–19 School Year, Graham High School engaged in the opportunity to reflect on its practices and explore building on the high school experience to ensure access and equity for each student. During this time the consulting organization, EPIC Impact Education Group, met with a newly established Transformation Team, collaborated with staff, surveyed students and staff members, conducted focus groups with students and convened with community business leaders. The intention of this work was to develop a guiding plan for the high school to better prepare students to be college and career ready.

Graham High School already has in place a variety of school-business partnerships and internships that offer students an opportunity to explore career pathways. However, according to state data and ACT data, there is an opportunity for improvement in grades 3-12. The purpose of this work was to explore opportunities for students and the high school in grades 9-12.

The educational landscape has changed. The United States is in the midst of two different job recoveries. As state officials and business leaders seek more and more skilled workers, since the recession, 95% of new jobs created were filled with workers with some college experience. As noted in a recent Georgetown University study, workers with some post-secondary experience now make up 65% of the workforce and earn more than 57% percent of all wages. The fact is that in today’s world a high school diploma alone is almost obsolete, and all graduates will need to seek some type of post-secondary credentials to compete in growing high skilled career fields. The purpose of the year-long project was to determine what Graham High Schools could do to better prepare our students for this changing landscape.

The first task was to take an honest reflection of the district and high school to examine if the district was indeed providing the rigor, relationships and support that our students need to become confident and competent learners.

During this research several strengths emerged. The increasing opportunities for students to participate in athletics, activities, college credit plus, internships, work programs, and career exploration were all at the top of the list for students. Students also indicated they like the small family atmosphere of the school. These strengths are great stepping stones for creating a school that prepares students for **success today, prepared for tomorrow.**

RIGOR

The last several years the Graham 5-Year Graduation Rate has increased from 91.7% to 92.1% to 96%. Our 4-Year Graduation Rate of 93.5% is well above the state average of 84.1%. The question we asked ourselves, as well as community, business leaders, staff, and students were are our graduates “College and Career Ready? We know our graduates must be prepared to compete with not only other students across the county, but with students across the state, country, and sometimes even internationally for being selected into a college of their choice, apprenticeship programs, or even high-tech jobs.

In 2017, only students thinking about college took the college placement tests; ACT or SAT. ACT and Ohio has set a standard that students who score an 18 on the English portion, 22 on the Math portion and a 21 on the Reading portion as being “remediation free,” meaning that students and families are not likely to spend extra valuable time or money on remedial coursework in college. In 2017, half of our students who were aspiring to go to college took the ACT and approximately one out of four (25%) met the English, Math and Reading Benchmarks. Ohio now requires all students in Ohio to take the ACT. The ACT also gives a composite score. **At Graham we have set a goal by 2023 that all of our student will score a 22 or higher and be “college and career ready.”**

Graduate degree holders gained 3.8 million jobs, Bachelor’s degree holders gained 4.7 million jobs, and Associate’s degree holders gained 3.1 million jobs, compared to workers with a high school diploma or less, who added only 80,000 jobs.

SOURCE: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/americas-divided-recovery/>

This goal will be accomplished by providing more access to our students to take advance placement (A.P.) courses, increasing the number of A.P. courses, increasing the rigor and other classes, as well as looking at the current middle school structure and the opportunity for student to complete Algebra by 8th grade. Students who do not complete Algebra by 8th grade are less likely to complete a STEM pathway in high school, unless they take calculus outside of the high school. In 2017, only about 16% of our students took an A.P. Class and last year 4.3% took an A.P. class.



RELATIONSHIPS

The opportunity to develop strong relationships with staff, teachers, coaches, and their peers is an important characteristic of high performing schools. Our student surveys indicated an opportunity to increase the connection between the school and students. While our teachers show up to school every day with the best intentions of creating meaningful and caring relationships with students, sometimes there is a gap between teacher intention and student perception. Taking the time to know students' families and interests will be a strategy to help close this gap. Also, only about 50% of our students are currently involved in extra or co-curricular activities. While our current financial situation may deter and prevent some students from participating, over the next five years we will survey students and uncover interests so we can increase the opportunities for students to engage in school activities.

Some people have said “hope” is not a strategy. However, increasing the level of hope in our students *is* a strategy to help our students become successful in life. Hope is also more than wishful thinking. Hope requires a level of optimism. The good news is that generally people *are* positive about the future, as shown by the Gallup World Poll. But while optimism is critical, it’s not enough. Hope also involves planning and taking action. Hopeful students 1) Believe their future will be better than their present...and they have the power to make it so; 2) Understand there are multiple pathways to success; and 3) Anticipate obstacles and plan for them.

Workers with at least some postsecondary education now make up 65 percent of the total employment. Bachelor’s degree holders now earn 57 percent of all wages.

SOURCE: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/americas-divided-recovery/>

Part of the high school’s plan the next five years is to create more student agency. Student agency is the capacity for students to take purposeful initiative, regardless of their circumstances. Young people with high levels of agency tend to seek meaning and act with purpose to achieve the conditions they desire in their own and others’ lives. By increasing student agency, relationships, and engagement the high school will create an educational environment where students drive their learning alongside their teachers.



RELEVANCE

Connecting student learning to students' interests and career pathways is meaningful to students. Making learning relevant is a strategy for increasing student engagement. Identifying opportunities for students to make real world connections with their classwork, opportunities for internships, work experiences, and project-based learning will make learning more relevant to students. Also integrating 21st Century Skills into the curriculum and providing feedback to students on the development of these skills will be essential in preparing our students to be college and career ready.

During our collaboration time with staff, parents, business leaders, and the Transformation Team essential 21st Century Skills were identified for student success. Those skills were:

Problem Solver
Empathetic
Resilient
Strong Communication Skills

Responsible
Flexible
Integrity
Collaborative

The important part of the purpose journey is remembering it is a five-year process. Adopting new practices, structures, behaviors, and processes to ensure all students have the access and preparation to be college and career ready will not happen over the night. The most important part of this journey is the belief that all students can be successful.

Over 95 percent of jobs created during the recovery have gone to workers with at least some college education, while those with a high school diploma or less are being left behind. Workers with at least some college education have captured 11.5 million of the 11.6 million jobs created during the recovery.

SOURCE: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/americas-divided-recovery/>



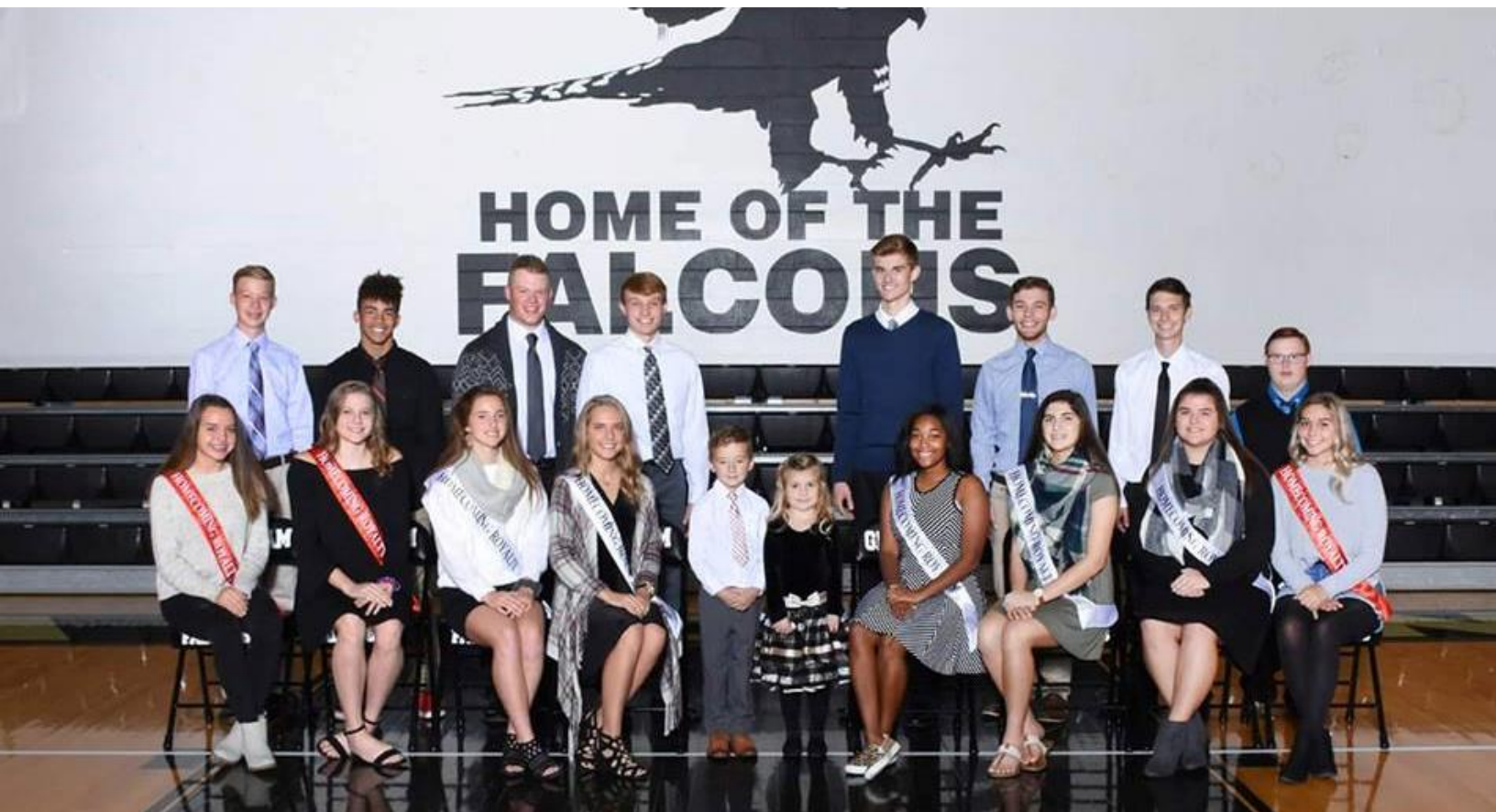


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Five-Year Strategic Plan

The objectives for this work were to develop 1) Goals, 2) Action Steps and 3) Measures of Success for the next five years for Graham High School. There is an old African proverb: **If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.** These goals are meant to be part of a journey over the next five years. While the goals and measures are ambitious, they are certainly attainable and intended to be met in five years.



GOAL 1: DEVELOP A HIGH PERFORMING STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Objective 1: To implement strategies and practices that will ensure that 100% of seniors will be enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year college/university, trade school, military, or will have a job that aligns with the student's chosen career path by graduation.

Action Steps

- A. Meet with all seniors and communicate to all parents Objective 1 and discuss support system in place (e.g., study hall, flight time, guidance support, etc.)
- B. 100% of seniors will apply to at least one 2-year college/university, 4-year college/university, trade school, or meet with branches of the military.
- C. 100% of seniors not intending on attending post-secondary options (college/university/trade school or enlisting in the military) will have an up-to-date résumé and will have applied to at least three businesses/organizations that align to the career path of their choosing.
- D. Certificates with students' names will be posted to a visible area in the school and updated with all names of colleges, universities, trade schools, military branches, or businesses to which they have applied. A star will be placed beside the name of any school, military, or business that accepts or hires the students.

Objective 2: To implement strategies and practices that will enable 100% of tested seniors to score at least a 22 or higher on the ACT by the year 2023. Starting in 2020, the ACT score for each senior will at least be a 19 and will improve by one point through 2023.

Action Steps

- A. Review and update attendance and grading policies for semester and yearlong courses.
- B. Develop a plan to support 9th grade students who have not successfully completed Algebra by grade eight.

- C. Coordinate and distribute EVAS data and ACT projections for all students. Develop an individual plan for all students not projected to meet ACT goal and communicate to teachers and parents.
- D. Review and update policies on criteria or prerequisites for A.P. or honor courses.
- E. Coordinate and review EVAS projection data for all students to identify students who should be taking advanced, A.P., and honor courses. Meet with students and communicate with parents of those who should be taking more rigorous coursework.
- F. Provide professional development and time for teacher discussion to establish a success criterion for high quality work. Establish a 70–80% success criteria for the 2020–21 school year.
- G. Develop a plan for supporting students not projected to meet ACT goal.
- H. Offer ACT support classes during the year and summer for interested students. Find ways to fund interested students needing financial support.
- I. Develop a Student Recognition Program for students exceeding the ACT goal (i.e., 26 or higher)

Objective 3: Reorganize the school day, schedule, and building to facilitate intensive support for students and more collaborative professional dialogue for staff.

Action Steps

- A. Organize classrooms in the building by grade teams.
- B. Develop a school schedule that provides more time for intensive and directive intervention for struggling students.
- C. Organize and deliver a back-to-school retreat for staff for collaboration and understanding new goals and objectives, as well as team building.
- D. Explore additional time in the contract day for teachers to meet in teams and collaborate.
- E. Identify an advisor period, homeroom and a strategy for students to develop a positive relationship with an adult in the building.

Objective 4: Implement strategies and practices to ensure that 100% of students will be involved in co- and extra-curricular activities and increase the opportunities for recognizing and celebrating student success.

Action Steps

- A. Identify what constitutes an extra- and co-curricular activity.

- B. Communicate to superintendent and staff current percentage of students involved in co- and extra-curricular activities. Establish a target percentage for first year growth.
- C. Develop a list of students that are not involved in co- or extra-curricular activities.
- D. Develop and administer an interest survey or inventory to all students not involved in co- or extra-curricular activities.
- E. Develop a list of possible co- and extra-curricular activities and mock budget and present to Superintendent.
- F. Develop a Student Recognition/Celebration Team made up of students and teachers to make recommendations for possible ideas for recognition and celebration.

Objective 5: Develop a school culture and foster classroom environments that are respectful, tolerant, culturally sensitive, and safe for all students and staff.

Action Steps

- A. Identify a minimal set of rules that are consistent across all classrooms and with the high expectations that business and employers would expect of their employees. Post expectations in each classroom and around the building.
- B. Establish a Handbook/Discipline Team to review handbook/school rules and make recommendations to Principal.
- C. Establish and communicate a set of administrative and teacher procedures for dealing with school discipline issues.
- D. Each staff member must be consistent and hold each other accountable for following through on expectations, procedures, and rules for students and staff. Identify methods for how this will be monitored.
- E. Establish and communicate clear procedures for staff when principals are unavailable or out of the building.
- F. Staff will make one positive contact with each student's parents or guardians in the first month of school. Identify how many other positive contacts are expected and monitoring procedures for throughout the school year.
- G. Develop and implement a yearly school survey to all stakeholders that include opportunities for feedback on Student Learning, Culture, and Communications.

GOAL 2: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Objective 1: Develop and implement a communications strategy to inform all parents, students, and staff the on High School Transformation Plan and updates during the year.

Action Steps

- A. Conduct a communications audit of current newsletters and website to improve clarity, coherence, and navigation.
- B. Ensure a regular part of the newsletter recognizes student success and updates parents on the Transformation Plan.
- C. Include opportunities for feedback on communications strategy on yearly stakeholder survey. (See Goal 1: Objective 5)

MEASURING SUCCESS

Measures are important for monitoring success. At Graham we don't consider not meeting ambitious objectives as failure. It's only failure when we do not set the highest expectations for our students and ourselves. Every year we will monitor our progress toward achieving these measures and make the necessary course corrections along the way.

The following measures were identified to monitor success of the next 5 years. Great schools set ambitious schools.

1. Number of students participating in extra- and co-curricular activities will increase.
2. Number of behavior infractions will decrease.
3. Level of Hope as report by students in surveys will increase.
4. Level of engagement as reported by students will increase.
5. Percentage of students scoring a 22 or higher on the ACT will improve each year, until 2023 when 100% of students will score a 22 or higher on the ACT.

TRANSFORMATION TEAM MEMBERS

Mindy Bechtel *Counselor*

Todd Buschur *Teacher*

Richard Ford *Parent*

Linda Goddard *Parent*

Tabbatha Greek *Parent*

Donna Jarzab *Teacher*

Holly Kamper *Student*

Alex Sparks *Student*

James Stickley *Parent*

Jessica Thomas *Teacher*

Lexi Traylor *Student*

Polly Trenor *Teacher*

John Tullis *Teacher*

Christina VanHoose *Parent*

Jacob Washburn *Student*

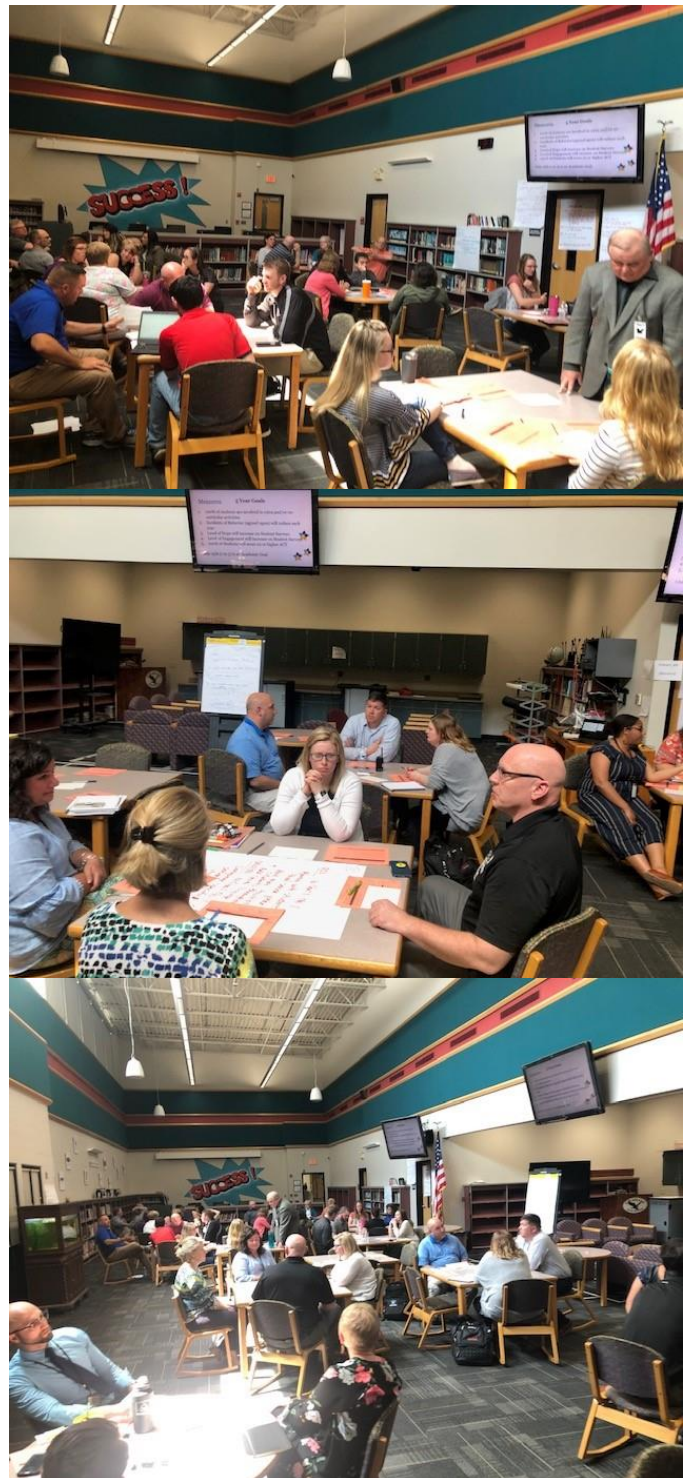
Chris Washington *Higher Ed Partner*

Toni Overholser *Higher Ed Partner*

Deb Wortman *Ohio High Point Director*

Steve Setty *Board Member*

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