



**MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #17**

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**2012 - 2015**

**ADOPTED June 23, 2011**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This current plan covering the years 2012-2015 is designed to serve the board as a reference for continued improvement in the educational quality of our three schools, Browns River and Camel's Hump Middle Schools and Mount Mansfield Union High School during a time of unusually difficult economic conditions. Additionally, we expect that this plan will serve to guide administrators in the development of specific school action plans. For our community members and students, we expect that this plan will also make clear our common goals and aspirations. This plan will be reviewed regularly throughout the year and updated as we approach the end of the designated period.

We recognize that to effectively maintain the high quality of our schools, we may need to make decisions about the allocation of limited resources in our programming and operations. We expect that this plan will serve to guide the Finance Committee and district administrators in making spending decisions. In our context discussion, we have tried to outline many of the current and near-term financial challenges that we like many communities will face as we prepare our annual budgets.

Our plan does not address areas under the supervision and budget of the Chittenden East Supervisory District such as special education and transportation, but we recognize that these services are a vital part of our students' and families lives. We will evaluate the delivery of these services as they affect students and the operation of our facilities in light of our contribution to the CESU budget and decisions by the CESU Executive committee through our MMUSD representatives.

Our overall priorities are in line with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills as described in many references including those listed at the end of this document. It is our aim to encourage students to take responsibility for their education and meet or exceed all listed expectations. Our review of this success will include students at all grade levels in the MMUSD and pay particular attention to narrowing any existing gaps in the achievement of groups of students, while continuing to improve the rigor and intellectual excellence of our offerings.

We have organized our strategic priorities into four areas: programming, teaching, community and operations. These highlighted priorities do not encompass all the important work done by administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students in our community, but will serve to focus our board policy discussions. We have included a number of indicators that we will consider in assessing improvement in each of these areas. We will schedule regular reviews of accomplishments in these areas throughout the school board calendar and will include these reviews on our agenda.

## CONTEXT

### **Current Status and Past Achievements**

One of the top three high schools in Vermont per U.S. News & World Report 2009 ranking of “Best High Schools”  
<http://www.usnews.com/listings/high-schools/vermont>

Rated “best overall academic performance” in Vermont, with a score of 10/10 by Business Week, January 2009.  
[http://images.businessweek.com/ss/09/01/0115\\_best\\_schools/47.htm](http://images.businessweek.com/ss/09/01/0115_best_schools/47.htm)

MMUHS rated 10 out of a possible 10 By GreatSchools <http://www.greatschools.org/vermont/jericho/schools>

MMUHS’s 2009 Reading, Math and Writing SAT mean scores were the highest in Chittenden County (VT. Department of Education).

MMUHS’s 2009 graduation rate was 96%. Vermont’s 2009 graduation rate was 88% and the U.S. rate was 69% (U.S. Department of Education).

82% of the AP exams taken in 2009 received a score of 3 or higher. This compares to 68% for the State of Vermont (VT. Department of Education and College Board).

From 2008-2010, MMUHS’s NECAP proficiency rates in Reading, Math and Writing ranked in the top 3 as compared to all Vermont high schools (VT. Department of Education).

### **Fiscal Realities**

The MMU Board, like many others around the state, is facing increasing pressure from declining state and federal revenue in the face of the continuing recession and the slow recovery. The per pupil block grant provided to local school districts has remained unchanged for two years and its future level of funding is uncertain, as is the annual determination of the statewide property tax. In addition to other pressures on the education fund and annual review of tax mitigation programs for current use and income sensitivity, this uncertainty will cause us to carefully review all our programs and services in the coming years to ensure that we are able to meet and even exceed our strategic priorities while maintaining ongoing

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operations and capital projects without overburdening local taxpayers. Added to this fiscal uncertainty is the reality of declining student enrollments which lessen the revenue available to our schools and may make it harder to maintain certain programs and services. We encourage everyone in the community to follow and participate in district budget discussions during the Fall months of each year.

## **STRATEGIC VISION AND PRIORITIES**

### **The Big Picture**

All students of the MMUSD shall graduate with the necessary knowledge, skills, work ethic and confidence to fulfill their personal aspirations and contribute meaningfully to their communities as adults.

We expect that all students and their families as well as staff in our schools will practice tolerance and mutual respect in their interactions. We believe that ethnic, gender, economic and personal diversity all make a stronger learning community. Our schools will be safe, nurturing environments where students should feel connected to each other as well as to adults within the school. We expect all students to look out for the welfare of others to ensure that this climate of security and respect is maintained for all.

We believe that all students should have access to a relevant common curriculum that challenges learners to reach their fullest potential, and which includes diverse content in the language arts, math, science, history, fine arts and music. Students will pursue excellence in all their endeavors and develop a passion for lifelong learning. We expect our educational leadership and faculty to show agility, flexibility, adaptability and forward thinking to evolve this curriculum to reflect changing local and global needs.

### **Strategic Priorities**

#### **Programming, Skills and Knowledge**

Students will take responsibility for their own learning and will demonstrate success in reading, writing, listening, speaking and numeracy and problem-solving as measured by local, regional and national assessments based on student growth.

#### a) Assessment results:

- School
- Regional
- Subgroup e.g. (free/reduced, gender)
- AP results
- ACT/SAT
- Item Bank Assessments
- Math Level Indicator
- District
- Cohort
- Report card
- Gates
- Results of school-based rubrics that demonstrate responsibility for personal learning

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- b) Summary of economically disadvantaged students' academic growth as measured by local, state and national assessments

Students will explore chosen areas beyond the core curriculum that lead to future opportunities: vocational ed; internships; community service; athletics; and other co-curricular activities.

- a) Number of students in co-curricular activities including non-school sponsored activities:

- Athletics
- Clubs
- Specific grade/school-wide community service units and participation (5-8 & 9-12)
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade survey of exploratory experience
- Arts
- Community service activities
- Tech Ed exploratory program summary grades 5-8 (how it helps with choices for vocational opportunities)

- b) Evidence that all students have explored chosen areas beyond core curriculum as measured by school-based rubrics.

Students will to learn and adapt to changing technologies so that they will function effectively in college and in the workplace.

- a) Summary of technology programming adjustment  
b) Identify and report on integration of technology in core curricula  
c) Summary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill development in grades 9-12 as measured by school-based rubrics

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Students will demonstrate knowledge of world geography and world cultures sufficient to understand the challenges of increasing global interactions and be able to cooperate effectively in an increasingly diverse local environment.

- a) Results of district unit assessments in world geography and cultures
- b) Personal development report card results
- c) Number of students successful in foreign language courses

Students will engage in active civic involvement so that they will be informed and enthusiastic participants in the political life of their communities.

- a) Evidence of curriculum that engages students in civic involvement, civic education and the political process
- b) Summary of participation in civic events and opportunities

### **Teaching and Leadership**

We believe that quality of instruction is the most important determinant of student success and we will hire, mentor, and retain a highly proficient teaching force that will promote high expectations for all students and will be accountable for student performance.

We expect school administrators to be educational leaders engaged with their teaching and support staff to ensure continued student growth and promote a culture of high expectations for all students.

- a) Retention rate of teachers within the first five years of employment
- b) Bi-annual report of mentoring program (district/school)
  - Number of teachers
  - Number of mentors
  - Survey results of participants and mentors
- c) Summary of professional development activities
- d) Level of education of teaching staff
- e) Accountable for student results:
  - Evidence of data driven decision making
  - Confidential examples of teacher goals related to student performance and percentage of teachers
  - Outcomes of administrative performance-based evaluation study

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### **Community of Learning**

Students will build rewarding relationships with their peers and with adults.

- a) Results of Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- b) Overview of behavior and discipline comparative data
- c) Summary of personal development results in grades 5-8
- d) Results of Senior Class Survey and Advisory Program Evaluations

Parents, families and the community at large will act as vital partners in expectation and support of students' success.

- a) Summary of parent survey results
- b) Aggregate of parent/community partnerships and volunteer efforts

### **Operations and Facilities**

We will manage district facilities to accomplish our mission and engage the local community while maintaining financial viability.

- a) Annual review of capital plans and outcomes
- b) Survey results pertaining to facilities management
- c) Results of facilities assessment/audit
- d) Review tax rate trends

We will engage students, teachers and community in the fullest educational and recreational use of these facilities.

- a) Summary of building use activities (i.e. community members and educational staff)

## **CONCLUSION**

This plan is meant to guide board discussions in the next few years, and to that end we will create regular checkpoints for review of progress we are making on effectively addressing these priorities. There are many areas of our school plans and priorities that are not explicitly addressed in this document. We have purposely tried to focus on areas where we feel we can and should make progress. There are many other priorities that follow from our vision for our schools which we feel are already a vital part of our school plans and which we believe should continually be examined: nurturing the physical and emotional health of our students; increasing community and parental involvement; supporting a commitment to environmentally sustainable communities; stimulating critical thinking and creativity; instilling a lifelong love of learning; and fostering a caring and compassionate school community. In our desire to establish measurable accountability, we cannot lose sight of the immeasurable qualities of courage, determination, vitality and curiosity that all contribute to excellent performance.

This plan will also serve as a guide to budget planning by the Finance Committee as we work together with school administrators and the community at large to ensure that we are spending our limited resources effectively and advocating for strong support from our local and state representatives.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

***Roots of Success: Effective Practices in Vermont Schools.*** Vermont Department of Education 2009.  
[http://www.education.vermont.gov/new/pdffdoc/pubs/educ\\_pub\\_effective\\_practices10.pdf](http://www.education.vermont.gov/new/pdffdoc/pubs/educ_pub_effective_practices10.pdf)

***The Transformation of Education in Vermont: A Framework for Transformation from the Vermont State Board of Education.*** Vermont State Board of Education 2008.  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdffdoc/dept/transformation/transformation\\_080108.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdffdoc/dept/transformation/transformation_080108.pdf)

***Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.*** The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills 2009.  
[http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?Itemid=120&id=254&option=com\\_content&task=view](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?Itemid=120&id=254&option=com_content&task=view)

***Teaching and Learning Standards.*** New England Association of Schools and Colleges 2009  
[http://cpss.neasc.org/getting\\_started/2011\\_standards/](http://cpss.neasc.org/getting_started/2011_standards/)