



# Oxford City Schools 5 Year Strategic Plan

Developed 2010-2011

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Board of Education  
Karen Phillips, President  
Dr. Tony Bolton, Vice President  
Alex Davenport  
Todd Davis  
Marvin Jones  
Pat Wayne Shaddix

Jeff Goodwin, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

*"Proud of Our Past – Preparing for the Future"*  
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# Oxford City Schools

*Proud of Our Past – Preparing for the Future*

December 17, 2010

To The Stakeholders of the Oxford City School System:

One of our greatest responsibilities as a Board is that of Strategic Planning for the future of our school district. It is an important process that we feel should include and reflect the priorities and beliefs of the stakeholders we serve. When our Board and District leadership set out to construct our new plan, great care was taken to include community members, parents, students, and staff in the process. We feel we were successful in this goal as over 1,000 different individual stakeholders participated in either small group sessions, presentations held at individual schools, on-line surveys, or strategic planning teams. The data we obtained was enlightening and valuable in constructing a document that will serve our students into the future.

Besides our stakeholders' input, other data in the form of Federal, State, and Local documents was used in creating Oxford's Five Year Strategic Plan. They include our AdvancED (national accreditation body for school systems) Accreditation Report, Local Continuous Improvement Plans developed at each school, and State mandated Capital, Professional Development, and Technology Plans. Our Strategic Plan represents a merger of information contained in all these sources condensed and prepared for the citizens of our community.

We appreciate all who participated in this process which will be an integral part of guiding our school district for the next five years.

Please take time to review our Strategic Plan and feel free to contact your Superintendent and Board Members if you have any further questions at (256) 241-3141.

Sincerely,

Karen Phillips, Board President

Dr. Tony Bolton, Board Vice President

Alex Davenport, Board Member

Marvin Jones, Board Member

Todd Davis, Board Member

Pat Wayne Shaddix, Board Member

Jeff Goodwin, Ed.D., Superintendent

Jeff Goodwin, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent*

## **Board Members**

Karen Phillips  
*President*

Dr. Tony Bolton  
*Vice President*

Alex Davenport

Todd Davis

Marvin Jones

Pat Wayne Shaddix

## OUR VISION

Our vision is to be **the** leader in all aspects of education. From the time a child enters kindergarten until graduation we want to provide the best instruction, extra-curricular activities, facilities and services enabling our students to become productive successful citizens.

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Oxford City School System, the focal point of a growing, diverse community, is to ensure the academic success of all students through a student-centered system of individualized instruction, highly qualified staff, exemplary facilities, and effective use of all resources.

## OUR BELIEFS

Based on the response of stakeholder groups, the Beliefs of the stakeholders of our district are as follows:

1. Family is a primary influence of a child's development.
2. Each child deserves an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.
3. Each child has a gift and, afforded the opportunity, is capable of success.
4. Learning is a lifelong process.
5. Character development is essential.
6. Each child deserves equal opportunity.
7. Higher expectations yield higher results.
8. Youth of today are the portrait of tomorrow.
9. Unlocking minds to explore and investigate is the key to learning.
10. Knowledge is the key to informed decision-making.

## OUR PRIORITIES

The Priorities of the stakeholders of our district, in order, are as follows:

1. Classroom resources for teachers
2. Technology for student use
3. Low pupil/teacher ratio
4. Modern facilities
5. Fine Arts electives
6. Extra-curricular offerings

These priorities were generated through on-line and paper surveys and reflect the manner in which stakeholders desire to see resources allocated in our district.

## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Since 2005 the Oxford City School System has conducted several needs assessments via on-line surveys; school visits; large group community meetings and interviews with faculty, parents and students. These multiple data sources have been crucial in determining priorities in the district. Based on this information generated by stakeholders the following, in rank order, were determined to be district priorities for the next strategic planning cycle:

- 1) Classroom resources for teachers
- 2) Technology for student use
- 3) Low pupil/teacher ratios
- 4) Modern facilities
- 5) Fine Arts electives
- 6) Extra-curricular offerings

In regards to the priorities listed by parents, the Oxford City School System has been responsive to these needs. During the past two fiscal years the Board of Education along with the Oxford City Schools Education Foundation has supplemented all classroom teachers with funds to buy supplies for their classrooms. This figure represents over \$200,000. Additionally, the Board has allocated \$10 per student per school for classroom supplies for each student to eliminate much of the cost for parents when purchasing individual supplies for their children.

The Board has also made as a priority strengthening the technological infrastructure of our district increasing band width to 50 Mb and installing wireless connectivity throughout the district. All types of technology for student use including laptop labs, handheld digital readers, iPod<sup>®</sup> and iPad<sup>™</sup> technologies, individual response systems, interactive digital tablets, and “whiteboards” have become commonplace in classrooms. Innovative software to include digital foreign language and music labs are scheduled to be installed for student use in the near future. Oxford’s pupil/teacher ratio continues to be one of the best in our region as the district has averaged over \$1,000,000 in funding for teachers above state allotments over a five year period allowing the district to offer art, foreign language, technology, Advanced Placement courses and other electives. These “extra” courses would not exist without this conscious investment in classrooms made by our Board.

Our district's facilities are also a point of pride for our community. Our current Capital Plan has new construction or renovation projects at each of our six schools. Since 2005 the district has installed a roof at Coldwater Elementary; completed a new C.E. Hanna School, Freshman Academy, and main building at Oxford High School, as well as nearly completing a new DeArmanville Elementary. The Freshman Academy and new Oxford High School were built with funds provided by the City of Oxford through a Bond issue at no cost to the school district.

The Fine Arts program in our district has been a priority based on the requests of students, parents, and community members. Since 2005 the System has added theatre, creative writing, cultural French, art, elementary band, and broadcast journalism for students. Extra-curricular offerings continue to be strong with over 1,000 students participating in athletic programs, band, choir, scholar's bowl, robotics league, career tech club, and co-curricular activities.

Stakeholders in the district have also been surveyed as to their thoughts on issues outside stated priorities such as Oxford's school calendar, student dress code, safety, and instruction. A majority of parents (66%), students (77%), and teachers (77%) responded in asking the district to keep fall break and future calendars as close to its current format as possible. Stakeholders responding to our surveys in the past have indicated this preference and a majority noted that synchronization with other county school systems was not an issue.

Stakeholders have also expressed support for the System's adopted student dress code with 71% of parents, 60% of students, and 68% of teachers responding positively to the current code. Contained within those positive responses were suggestions for discussion in crafting dress code policy in future years.

Stakeholders have also expressed positive thoughts about the safety of our schools (90% of parents, 92% of teachers, and 75% of students) and the quality of education in the district (91%, 96%, and 75% respectively). Strong confidence was denoted in the procedures, curriculum and leadership at the district and building levels in the Oxford City School System. Cleanliness of facilities, quality of teachers employed in the district, and technology available for student use were also noted as areas of strength district-wide demonstrating the commitment of the Oxford City Board of Education in providing a quality program of studies for all children in the System.

Finally, the School System continues to enjoy a strong positive relationship with our local City Government. Since 2005 the City of Oxford has issued a \$26,000,000 Bond for construction and land improvements within the District and passed a one-cent sales tax valued at \$4,800,000 for fiscal year 2010 to replace the allocation previously allotted to the District. The strong support extended by our civic leadership is a vital component to the success of our School System.

## DISTRICT ACCREDITATION

In 2009 the Oxford City School System applied for and attained District Accreditation by AdvancED, a nationally recognized association. Oxford received the highest marks possible during this process and was charged with developing a continuous improvement process to maintain this level of excellence. Commendations and recommendations of this report are integrated into this plan. The entire District Accreditation document is posted for viewing on our website at [www.oxfordcityschools.com](http://www.oxfordcityschools.com) "District Accreditation Assessment Report."

## THE FUTURE 2010-2015

Based on the input from all stakeholder groups represented by the Oxford City School System, the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan will revolve around the following Strategies:

1. We will construct fiscally sound budgets that include provisions for keeping healthy reserves, measured savings goals and maximizing discretionary funds for student's benefit.
2. We will actively seek opportunities for greater parental involvement in all aspects of the educational process.
3. We will increase the instructional use and availability of technology for students and staff.
4. We will develop engaging and challenging curricula that allow for the maximization of intellectual growth for each student.
5. We will continue to seek out and implement the highest quality of instructional strategies that will provide each student with individualized direction and support.

Strategy I: Fiscal solvency is a must for any school district. Currently the Oxford City School System has healthy operating funds and reserves. This vitality is due in part to the one-cent sales tax passed by the Oxford City Council and the one-cent sales tax passed by the Calhoun County Commission exclusively for schools. To continue the financial success the district has experienced the Board of Education will continue to generate yearly budgets that have revenues to cover all projected expenditures with contingencies to account for unanticipated emergencies. The district will not take on any debt without a careful examination of all

financial factors impacting such a decision. Resources for student learning will be the top priority for expenditures.

- Strategy II: Parents are a school system's most important partners in the education of children. Healthy and effective home to school relationships are beneficial to a child's social and intellectual development. The Oxford City School System will continue the involvement of all parent groups by strengthening parent-school communication through groups and activities that promote positive interactions such as parent teacher organizations, school leadership teams, planning committees, and "open houses," book fairs, visitation days, academic nights, and parent workshops.
- Strategy III: Technology is a powerful instruction tool for learning when embedded into curriculum. The Oxford City School System believes that a robust infrastructure and well trained staff can utilize emerging technologies to benefit students at all academic levels. To be prepared for the challenge students will face in the future, current hardware and support will be provided and innovative professional development maintained for all staff.
- Strategy IV: All students have academic potential. It is the job of the Oxford City School System in conjunction with parents to accentuate each student's gifts and abilities. The district will continue to expand all academic and extra-curricular programs in an effort to serve every child. A multi-tiered system of curricula will be offered in order to address all learners at their individualized levels of learning. All types of art and technical electives and innovative programs will be developed and expanded in accordance with our beliefs and priorities.
- Strategy V: Leadership and teacher effectiveness are crucial in order for individualized learning to take place. Oxford City School's staff will create/maintain a culture of learning for both adults and students. Learning is an ongoing process that takes place through direct, explicit instruction, collaboration, risk taking, practicing, learning from one's mistakes and reflecting and refining practices. Oxford City School's staff will model "ongoing" learning in order to continually improve high quality strategies and techniques to actively engage all students in lifelong learning. Embedding collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking skills and fostering creativity are essential components of curriculum and instruction and are essential 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills.

STRATEGY I: We will construct fiscally sound budgets that include provisions for keeping healthy reserves, measured savings goals and maximizing discretionary funds for student's benefit.

ACTION PLANS:

- 1) Maintain a healthy reserve based on economic conditions in our General Fund and continue development of savings accounts to increase reserves.
- 2) No new major initiatives will be undertaken during prorated or possibly prorated fiscal years without a cost benefit analysis being prepared for the Board by the Superintendent and Chief School Financial Officer.
- 3) Keeping sales tax revenue unreserved for operational and personnel costs to account for system population growth and capital needs.
- 4) Investing discretionary dollars outside of General Fund reserves and savings into maintaining low pupil/teacher ratios, electives, advanced and intervention courses, professional development for certified and non-certified staff and instructional technology.
- 5) Posting all BOE financial information on line for stakeholder information.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- 1) Stable and consistent revenue sources

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE:

- 1) Board of Education
- 2) Superintendent
- 3) Chief Financial Officer
- 4) District Leadership Personnel

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Cost

Software upgrades

Benefit

Greater stakeholder access to financial information

General fund and reserve accounts solvent for educational program spending.

STRATEGY II: We will actively seek opportunities for greater parental involvement in all aspects of the educational process.

ACTION PLANS:

- 1) Include parents on System and school planning teams.
- 2) Educate parents in monitoring their child's academic progress.
- 3) Strengthen PTO participation through active recruitment efforts including efforts to increase diverse representation.
- 4) Include more parent resources on System's website.
- 5) Continue to use on-line surveys to allow stakeholder input into System-wide initiatives and planning.
- 6) Increase efficiency of communication with stakeholders through System-wide resources and automated programs.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- 1) Building level personnel assigned to work with parents
- 2) Technical expertise and technology to administer and compile survey data
- 3) Printed and on-line parental resource materials

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE:

- 1) All district and building level leadership

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Cost

Technology upgrades

Parental resources, on-line and Printed

Benefit

Greater access to parental input

Opportunities for parents to be more active in their child's learning

STRATEGY III: We will increase the instructional use and availability of technology for students and staff.

ACTION PLANS:

- 1) Commit funds each year for replacement and purchase of emerging technology for instructional use.
- 2) Provide staff development in the use of technology for certified and non-certified employees.
- 3) Provide staff development for teachers in order to embed technology curriculum with emphasis on active engagement of student use of tech tools to enhance learning.
- 3) Offer electives at all grade levels that accentuate technological literacy.
- 4) Recruit additional technology support personnel and provide professional development for all personnel with regard to emerging technology.
- 5) Partner with local businesses to increase expertise and cooperation between the district and industry.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- 1) Funding to replace obsolete hardware and software
- 2) Funding for adequate staff development for faculty and staff on the use of new and existing technology
- 3) Personnel and supplies needed for any new elective courses
- 4) Competitive salary schedules for IT and resource teachers working with instructional technology

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE:

- 1) Superintendent
- 2) Human Resources Director
- 3) Operations and Maintenance Coordinator
- 4) Curriculum Coordinator
- 5) IT Staff
- 6) All Building Level Certified Employees

## COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

### Cost

Additional personnel

Professional development opportunities

Up-to-date technology

### Benefit

Greater management of instructional technologies and integration of technology into classroom teaching

Better trained workforce in implementing system goals

Student learning opportunities increased

STRATEGY IV: We will develop engaging and challenging curricula that allow for the maximization of intellectual growth for each student.

**ACTION PLANS:**

- 1) Strengthen the program of study for students identified as intellectually gifted throughout the day to include problem solving creativity and critical thinking skills.
- 2) Implement research based intervention programs matched to the needs of students to maximize their intellectual potential.
- 3) Increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses and passing Advanced Placement Exams. Provide for staff development to increase rigor and improve students' problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- 4) Expand the Pre-K program offered in the district and seek outside partnerships.
- 5) Continue to increase electives based on student/parent requests for courses such as more foreign languages, personal finance, photography, and elementary electives.
- 6) Explore options for providing additional extra-curricular activities (academic clubs, sports, etc. for students below 7<sup>th</sup> grade and expansion in 7-12).

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**

- 1) Continued local funding for instructors, equipment, teacher's supplies, and student materials
- 2) Funding for staff development
- 3) Ample space and conditions for expanding elective programs
- 4) Explore funding for technological data management systems and on-line learning or find free resources

**PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE:**

- 1) Superintendent
- 2) Curriculum Coordinator
- 3) Human Resources Director

- 4) Student Support Services Coordinator
- 5) Building Level Principals
- 6) Specialty Area Teachers

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Cost

Additional personnel

On-line courses

Partnership with universities and technical schools

Professional development and equipment for personnel

Space for future courses

Benefit

Expanded course offerings and level of instruction

Greater opportunities to access electives

Expansion of advanced and career based courses

Greater level of expertise and instruction for courses

Increased opportunities for students to participate in curricular offerings

STRATEGY V: We will continue to seek out and implement the highest quality of instructional strategies that will provide each student with individualized direction and support.

ACTION PLANS:

- 1) Develop plans to guide and facilitate students in developing individual skills and personal goals through an effective counseling program.
- 2) Provide ongoing job embedded professional development.
- 3) Continue to implement district and school Professional Learning Communities to increase knowledge and skills in leading effective instruction and practices.
- 4) Address 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in all curriculum, instructional, and school level plans.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

- 1) Data, surveys, assessments, programs, interest inventories, etc. to guide students in developing personal goals
- 2) Funding for staff development and time built into schedules for job embedded professional development
- 3) Expansion of Professional Learning Communities at the district and school levels to include all staff

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE:

- 1) Superintendent
- 2) Curriculum Coordinator
- 3) Human Resources Director
- 4) Technology Staff
- 5) Student Support Services Coordinator
- 6) Principals
- 7) Certified Staff at all schools

COST BENEIFT ANALYSIS:

Cost

Additional personnel

Professional development  
for Staff

Benefit

Expanded course offerings and level of  
instruction

Increase literacy skills in areas of using  
a variety of assessments to guide  
instruction

Increasing active student engaged  
learning and collaborations

Utilizing technology tools for purposeful  
learning