



GIPS ON TRACK TO THRIVE 2025:

Better and Stronger Than Ever

When the pandemic hit, Grand Island Public Schools had to reimagine education. Like so many school districts around the globe, ours wasn't immune to COVID-19, which touched households, classrooms and budget lines — and everything in between.

Over the past year, GIPS has reconsidered project and initiative itineraries. The district conducted a SWOT analysis to learn how to better diagnose the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that would be exacerbated by the pandemic. To that end, GIPS concentrated on clarifying district priorities, engaging school and community leaders, and executing budget decisions that promote equity. With the pandemic's economic impacts creating an unprecedented environment for PK-12 education, GIPS is proactively repurposing its resources to ensure students are on track to thrive.



ACCEPTING THE INVITATION FOR INNOVATION

Our district is stronger now because staff saw this moment as an opportunity to innovate and to reimagine possibilities for students.

With collective awareness and recalibrated timelines comes an elevated strategic plan: **GIPS On Track to Thrive 2025: *Better and Stronger Together.***

This comprehensive strategic plan includes a redefinition of roles and departments, and a repurposing of resources to meet district priorities. All decisions — from programming to personnel — will be made with student experiences in mind.

In these difficult times, efficiency is paramount, which is why GIPS collaborated with the District Management Group to analyze staffing and improve efficiency. A thorough examination of the district

resulted in 11 recommendations, of which GIPS acted upon three of them, and continues to evaluate the remaining eight for possible implementation. This effort realigned more than \$1.073 million to help clarify objectives and maximize performance.

The pandemic was undoubtedly a disruption, but it never stopped GIPS from upholding its mission of ***Every Student, Every Day, A Success!***

The runway is set for **GIPS On Track to Thrive 2025**, which will be engineered around student-centered shifts, resource alignment, and will shape an equitable path forward that will leave us better and stronger than ever.

Join us as we take flight.



BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPELS GIPS FORWARD

*The Grand Island Public Schools Board of Education is committed to **GIPS On Track to Thrive 2025**, which is scheduled to be adopted in July 2021.*

We are proud of the GIPS Board of Education for embracing opportunities for innovation!

There are a few key initiatives that will be immediately addressed with this new strategic plan:

✓ Virtual School

- GIPS will continue to offer virtual elementary school and introduce middle and high school virtual opportunities

✓ College & Career Achievement Center

- GIPS GEAR UP team and educational partners will have designated space in all middle school and high school sites, where each student has access to resources and a system of support. Services will range from academic tutoring to 1:1 college/career counseling to post-high school planning to family education.

✓ Thriving Minds

- GIPS will offer additional after-school opportunities for students and parents across grades K-8

✓ Long-Range Planning for Extracurricular Excellence Across District

- GIPS will unveil a sweeping review and strategy for cultivating strong athletics, fine arts and activities

✓ Academy Experiences Liaison

- GIPS' new position will provide enhanced college and career readiness opportunities for students, track continuum of experiences outlined in profile of a graduate, and develop a culture of business engagement throughout all programs at the Academies of Grand Island Senior High



STUDENT-CENTERED SHIFTS FOR REALIGNMENT

✓ Academic Coaches

- More intentional about promotion of 70/30 model (70 percent of time spent providing direct coaching supports to teachers)
- Support coaches available in all K-8 buildings

✓ Gifted & Talented Specialists

- Service delivery model to be embedded within Multi-Tiered System of Support
- Facilitate advanced, rigorous experiential learning opportunities designed to nurture students' talents and abilities

✓ Special Education

- Strengthen understanding and usage of positive and proactive continuum of services for all staff, creating common language
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities of all Special Education (SE) team members

✓ Reorganization of Technology Department

- Department adjusted to provide more services at campus level, offer consistent support across all sites
- Refinement of systems support processes and workflows to reduce turnaround times, bring majority of repairs on site



LITERACY AS OUR MAIN LEVER

- ✓ PK-12 Alignment
- ✓ Literacy Coalition
- ✓ Personalized Supports
- ✓ Professional Learning
- ✓ Equity Formulas



CRITICAL SUPPORT

In March 2020, GIPS didn't have the support of certain funds — CARES Act, ESSER — that have proven critical in the months since. We are hopeful that our state will allow these necessary funds to remain with the schools as we work to address the needs of our students.

ESSER dollars and CARES Act funds designed and designated to keep GIPS On Track to Thrive 2025:

✓ Safety & Security

- Investment in Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization technology to ensure the safest possible environment for education for students and staff
- More than 99% of all GIPS staff members who requested the COVID-19 vaccine have received at least the first dose

✓ Professional Development

- Training to support implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Support model
- Expansion of LETRS training

✓ Early Childhood Literacy

- New O'Connor Learning Center coming in fall 2021 will provide additional classrooms to benefit students
- Adoption of a Core Knowledge Language Arts curriculum has rapidly improved early childhood literacy rates across the district

✓ Mental Health

- Added supports for students and staff
- Additional counseling opportunities

✓ College & Career Connections

- Daily on-site access for college and workforce advising
- Upgraded state's first-ever registered apprenticeship program

✓ Accelerated Academic Supports

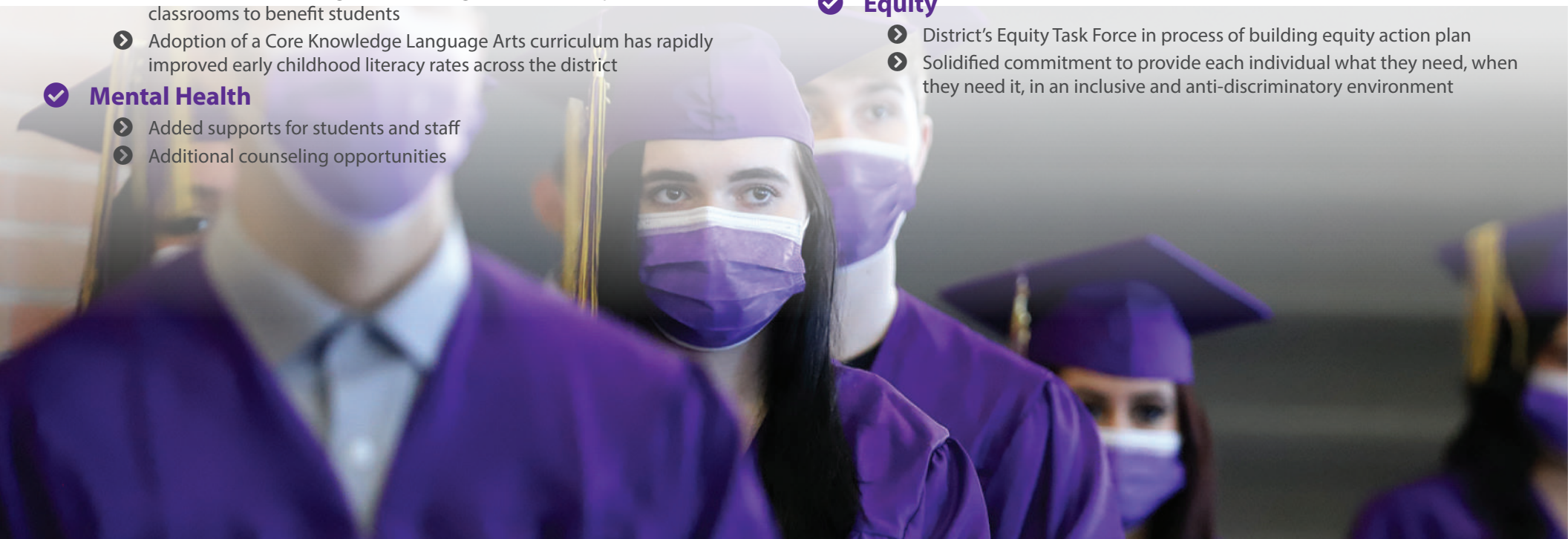
- Increased summer school offerings
- More intentional about promotion of 70/30 model (70 percent of time spent providing direct coaching supports to teachers)

✓ Technology

- Expanded 1:1 initiative
- LTE network and advanced internet connectivity for students

✓ Equity

- District's Equity Task Force in process of building equity action plan
- Solidified commitment to provide each individual what they need, when they need it, in an inclusive and anti-discriminatory environment



MASTER FACILITY PLANNING

In order to allow for these new initiatives, our facilities must be developed to allow for programming. The learning environments experienced by pupils during their academic achievement are directly related to the quality of the facilities. These facilities must be maintained, managed, and if necessary upgraded, so our students can maximize their potential.



ALIGNMENT OF RESOURCES

- ✓ **Academic Return on Investment (AROI)**
- ✓ **Annual Review & Refinement Based on District Priorities**
- ✓ **District Equity Plan Moving Forward**

- Eight workgroups:
 - ➔ Discipline & Attendance
 - ➔ Student Achievement
 - ➔ Graduation
 - ➔ Academic Acceleration
 - ➔ Differentiated Support
 - ➔ Early Childhood/Early Literacy
 - ➔ Communication
 - ➔ Extracurricular Activities
- Each workgroup analyzed equity disparity data, developed drivers and levers that would lead to system changes
 - ➔ System change could include budget, staff, policies and practices, and will eliminate or reduce equity disparities



10 POINTS OF PRIDE

1. Demonstration Schools for Rigor

- Four GIPS campuses — Starr Elementary (Stolley Park consolidated for two years with Starr); Jefferson Elementary; and Walnut Middle School — recognized in October 2020 as Demonstration Schools for Rigor, the only such campuses in the state to earn the honor.

2. Nebraska Outstanding New Principal of the Year

- Jefferson Elementary Principal Sheree Stockwell was named the NAESP Outstanding New Principal of the Year in December 2020.

3. 70+ Advanced Placement, Dual-Credit Opportunities Provided at No Cost to Students

- GIPS expanded partnerships with post-secondary partners at Central Community College, Wayne State College and the University of Nebraska - Kearney to remove a barrier for college headstart opportunities at the high school level.

4. 55+ Exploratory & Elective Courses Offered at Middle Schools

- GIPS offers tens of courses for middle school students to choose based on their interest and passion.

5. 12,201 Combined Years of Teaching Experience

- Throughout this challenging school year, teachers have stepped up to accelerate district support for students. GIPS is grateful to its experienced staff for always putting education and safety first as the district provided in-person learning opportunities, five days per week, since August.

6. Strength in Diversity

- GIPS includes students from 48 countries, with 48 languages spoken across the district. Our diversity is a point of pride.

7. GIPS Foundation's Commitment to Student Opportunities

- More than \$500,000 in scholarship money was distributed to GISH students in 2019-20.

8. Equity-Grounded, District-Wide Model

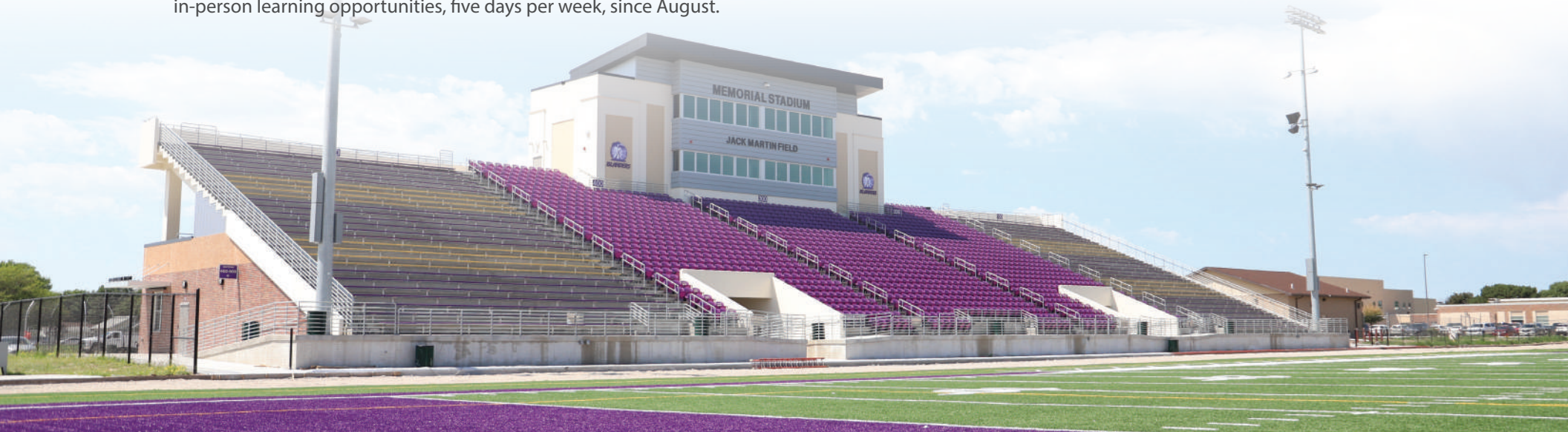
- Socioeconomic, racial and cultural barriers have no home at GIPS. The events of the past year have underscored how critical it is that we remain steadfast in our commitment to shattering obstacles for our students.

9. State & Nationally Recognized Academy Model

- The Academies of Grand Island Senior High offer six academies, 20 pathways, 53 sports and 113 clubs and activities.

10. Community-Minded Decision-Making

- Our decisions are not made in isolation, nor are they kept in the dark once approved. GIPS makes a majority of decisions following conversations with community members and school leaders.



STAY INVOLVED & ENGAGED

GIPS will utilize a number of means to ensure parents, students, staff, partners and the community are all informed of potential changes. We promise to stay engaged and keep you involved.

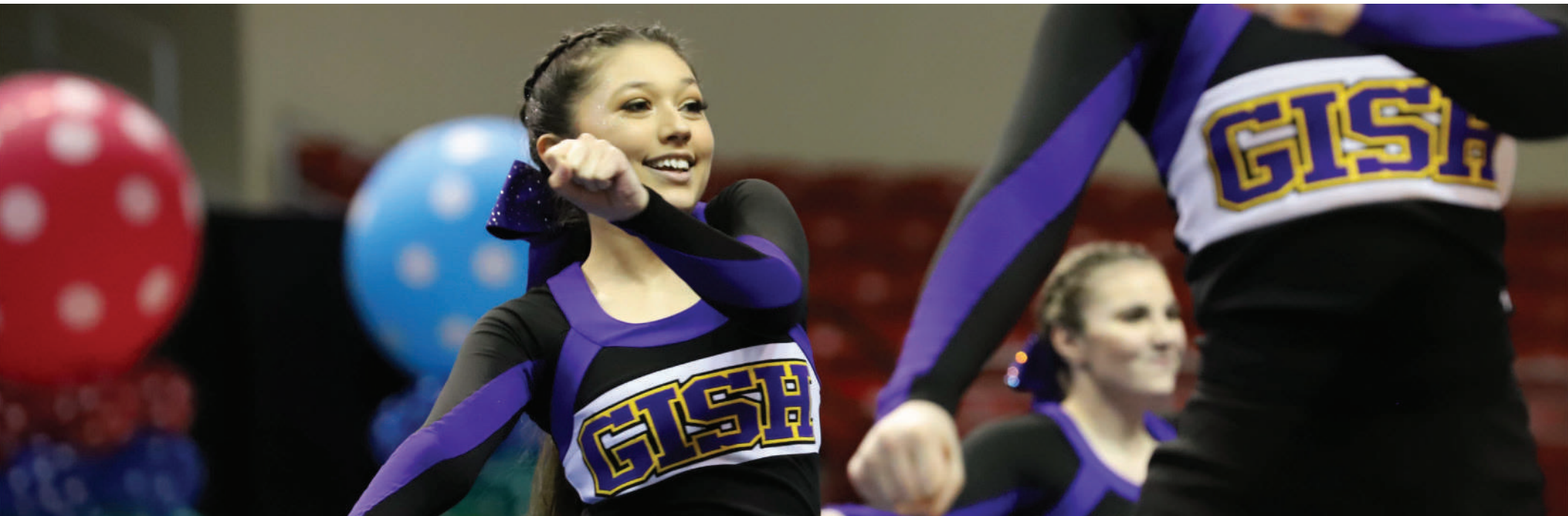
This will include:

- ✓ Phone, email and text messages to parents
- ✓ Local media coverage and advertising
- ✓ Live town hall meetings via GIPS Facebook page
- ✓ Stakeholder group meetings
- ✓ District website and social media
- ✓ Press conferences or live video presentations
- ✓ Surveys as needed

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

     @GIPublicSchools

#WeAreGIPS #GIPSReimagined #BetterTogether



Grand Island Public Schools is prepared to move forward in our absolute pursuit of providing the highest quality education for our students.

We have taken measured steps to disrupt and dismantle systemic barriers to educational access.

A reallocation of resources will help the district more specifically address student needs. We are using this opportunity to not just cut dollars but to really look at our programming and staffing and determine what is best for the collective.

We know the current landscape has many obstacles. Learning loss, attendance, food insecurity, social-emotional needs, and reading and math proficiency levels have all been exacerbated by the pandemic. GIPS will work to address them head-on.

This is an opportunity to create a stronger relationship with our community through transparency, and it's an opportunity we will not miss. Grand Island Public Schools is ready to meet this moment and the challenges of tomorrow.



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