

Henry James Memorial School

Annual Report 2023-2024

Simsbury Public Schools
Simsbury, Connecticut



*Teaching students to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow
with confidence and integrity*

Connections - Challenge - Character

Scott Baker - Principal
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Introduction and Purpose of our School Annual Report

The Simsbury Public Schools values continuous improvement. Each year, the leadership team at Henry James Memorial School develops a strategic plan to set direction for our teachers and students. This action plan incorporates Simsbury Public Schools' strategic goals (2019-2024), our Vision of a Graduate, information about HJMS, and school improvement indicators for the school year. The goals and benchmarks in our strategic plan were established following an analysis of state and district student performance data as well as staff, student, and family survey data. In addition, the goals are aligned with the [Simsbury Public Schools Strategic Plan](#). Throughout the year, teachers work in collaborative teams to assess student achievement with multiple indicators, monitor student progress, and adjust/refine instructional practices accordingly. Professional development plans also support improvement in our targeted areas. This document is a concluding analysis of the progress we've made toward these goals. We are excited to celebrate our results with you!

Scott Baker, Principal Henry James Memorial School
Simsbury, Connecticut

Information about Henry James Memorial School

Henry James Memorial School has a proud tradition of excellence. In philosophy and practice, Henry James Memorial School reflects the fundamental principles of middle level education:

- challenging and rigorous academic programs;
- an understanding that young adolescents have unique academic, behavioral and social needs which require an equally unique approach to education;
- safe, engaging and supportive learning environments which demonstrate a community of respect and personal responsibility; and most importantly
- the belief that ALL students can achieve at high levels.

Henry James Memorial School's mission statement, "**Connections, Challenge, Character,**" is a reflection of the middle school philosophy that is essential to the experience that we provide all of our students during their time at our school. We utilize the team structure, which enables our faculty and staff to know the interests and strengths of each student, thus meeting their individual learning needs. The teaming concept at Henry James Memorial School affords our students the opportunity to be a part of a smaller, more personalized learning environment that supports positive relationship-building throughout our school. Research demonstrates that these structures enhance student performance.

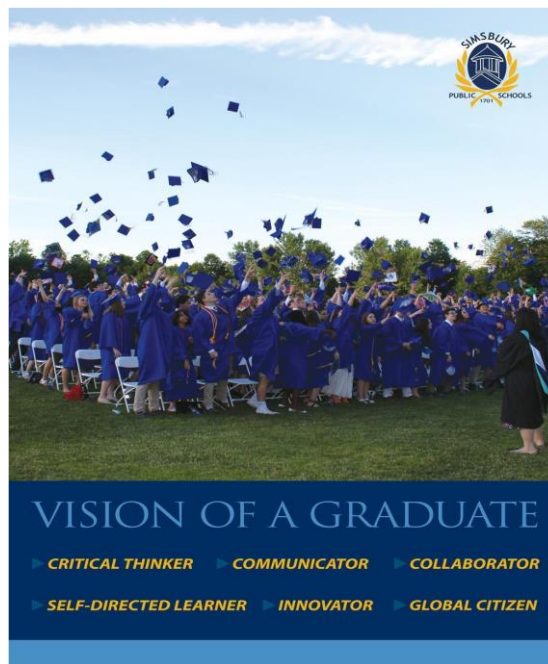
Henry James Memorial School currently maintains six interdisciplinary teams. Each team has a member from the Social Studies, Mathematics, English, Science, Wellness, and Special Education Departments. Additionally, members of our school counseling department and student support services (school social worker, school psychologist, school nurse) play active roles in team functioning. Teams meet daily to discuss individual student progress in meeting the academic, social, and behavioral expectations of Henry James Memorial School.

We are committed to providing our students with a supportive environment in which they can learn and grow as individuals. Our mission states, "*HJMS is an inclusive community that promotes **Connections**, both interpersonal and curricular. Interpersonal connections are cultivated between and among all contributors to the HJMS community so that all feel valued and have a voice. Curricular connections between classroom practice and the global society are paramount.*"

Students at Henry James Memorial School are encouraged to **Challenge** themselves and realize their full potential through classroom experiences and our many extracurricular programs. We are proud to offer our students numerous opportunities outside of the classroom to discover personal strengths through a wide array of activities that appeal to their many interests and talents. These opportunities foster creativity, intellectual curiosity, "out-of-the-box" thinking, and lead our students on the path to becoming life-long learners.

We support the **Character** development of our students through the **HJ Way - ROAR**. The HJ Way is based on three principles: **Be Respectful, Be Responsible,** and **Live with Integrity**. The HJ Way embodies our behavioral expectations for all of our students. These values promote positive social development, healthy peer relations, student leadership, and guide our students to become considerate, thoughtful members of our school community.

Simsbury Public Schools ~ Vision of a Graduate



Critical Thinker

- Engage in problem solving, inquiry, and reflective thinking
- Develop compelling questions
- Analyze information to consider varied perspectives
- Evaluate information to reason and solve problems



Communicator

- Listen actively
- Lift conversations by asking and responding to questions
- Deliver clear, concise, accurate ideas through spoken and written language
- Demonstrate an awareness of audience by adjusting purposefully



Collaborator

- Perform a variety of roles and responsibilities
- Function interdependently and flexibly with others
- Seek and contribute feedback
- Embrace contradictions and divergent ideas to accomplish a common goal



Self-Directed Learner

- Take initiative and responsibility for learning and productivity
- Use "experts" and other resources to pursue goals
- Demonstrate resilience, optimism, and perseverance
- Accomplish tasks through self-advocacy, self-confidence, and a growth mindset



Innovator

- Empower creativity and develop skills
- Use a variety of techniques as part of a process to enhance outcomes
- View failure as an opportunity to learn, persevere, and show flexibility
- Challenge the status quo, push boundaries, and achieve growth



Global Citizen

- Exemplify empathy, compassion, and respect in interactions with others
- Consider diverse perspectives and cultures
- Act responsibly and ethically
- Recognize impact of actions and civic decisions

Simsbury Public Schools Strategic Plan Goals 2019-2024

Student Growth and Success: Simsbury Public Schools will engage all students in rigorous, dynamic, and relevant learning experiences, in alignment to the Simsbury Vision of the Graduate, in order to ensure student growth and achievement.

Compassionate and Connected School Culture: Simsbury Public Schools will engage our students and adults in an inclusive, responsive, and safe environment that fosters the development of empathetic, ethical, and resilient community members.

Premier Workforce: Simsbury Public Schools will hire, invest in, and retain passionate and exceptional staff who will contribute to a challenging, innovative, and collaborative culture defined by continuous improvement.

Sustainable and Strategic Investments: Simsbury Public Schools will identify and advocate for the needs of our school communities in innovative ways to support the success and growth of all students, ensure fiscal responsibility, and the long-term stability of the district.

***Board of Education
Adopted June 11, 2019***

*“If you go to work on your goals, your goals will go to work on you. If you
go to work on your plan, your plan will go to work on you.
Whatever good things we build end up building us.”*

~ Jim Rohn

Goal 1: Student Growth and Success

Simsbury Public Schools will engage all students in rigorous, dynamic, and relevant learning experiences, in alignment to the Simsbury Vision of the Graduate, in order to ensure student growth and achievement.

Strategic Action Steps**Reading**

- Implement research based instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of all learners with an emphasis on comprehension.
- Administer and analyze the data from a standardized assessment (STAR Reading) twice a year to identify grade level trends (specific learning targets) and develop individualized instructional plans for students.
- Use Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to analyze data and to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and instructional strategies across all tiers.
- Utilize data teams and the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process to monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

Writing

- Implement research based instructional strategies aligned with the SPS trait-based analytic writing rubric.
- Integrate writing skills across content areas to allow students to apply those skills in the subject area disciplines.

Mathematics

- Administer and analyze the data from a standardized assessment (STAR math) twice a year to identify grade level trends (specific learning targets) and develop individualized instructional plans for students.
- Utilize data teams and the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process to monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- Use Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to analyze data and to monitor the effectiveness and pacing of our Math in Focus Curriculum and plan interventions and instructional strategies across all tiers.

Science

- Continue to implement and enhance a curriculum where students work to figure out natural or human made phenomena as they work towards mastery of the NGSS standards.
- Use PLCs to develop and administer performance based assessments that measure all 3 of the NGSS components: Science and Engineering Practices (SEP), Cross Cutting Concepts (CCC) and Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI)

- Provide focused instruction to improve student science discourse and student ability to effectively use data to support or refute arguments.

Performance Indicators (As measured by...)

- Smarter Balanced Mathematics Assessment - Grade 7 & 8 (Level 3 or better)
- Smarter Balanced ELA Assessment - Grade 7 & 8 (Level 3 or better)
- Next Generation Science Assessment- Grade 8 (Level 3 or better)

SMART Goals: (Specific/Measurable/Aggressive yet Achievable/Relevant/Time-Bound)

Mathematics Expectations by June 2024

By June of 2024, 70% of students in grades 7&8 will meet or exceed the SBA Math benchmark.

Mathematics Results for 2023-2024

59% of students in grades 7&8 met or exceeded the SBA Math benchmark.

- This is a 6% decrease from the 2022-2023 school-wide results.
- Grade 7 -59% / Grade 8 - 60%
- The 7th grade cohort experienced a decline of 8% from their 6th grade scores.
- The 8th grade cohort experienced a decline of 6% from their 7th grade scores.
- Historical and DRG comparative data show cohort declines, however, the declines were greater than in prior years.
- There was no decline in the special education subgroup from grade 6 to 7.
- Student performance relative to our comparison districts slipped from being in the top 5 this year.

Mathematics Next Steps for 2024-2025

- Strong gains made last year have not translated to maintaining the growth this year and a detailed action plan has been created that aims to regain the momentum from the prior year.
- We will implement a new testing platform (IXL) that will give individualized feedback to teachers and students and assist in creating personalized plans for practice and review.
- We will use IXL to identify and re-teach prerequisite skills for upcoming units.
- We will integrate and monitor high engagement teaching strategies with our Math in Focus curriculum as the department engages in the math curriculum review cycle.
- Student goal setting will be focused on performance and growth on both the SBA assessment and IXL during the year.
- We will continue analyzing data in the PLCs to prioritize specific mathematics standards for each course.
- We will continue to collaborate with the elementary schools and the high school to ensure vertical alignment.
- Support co-teaching, ASC tutoring programs, and fine tune our mathematics intervention model to make use of the IXL resources.

ELA Expectations by June 2024
By June of 2024, 80 % of students in grades 7&8 will meet or exceed the SBA ELA benchmark.
ELA Results for 2023-2024
<p>73% of students in grades 7&8 met or exceeded the SBA ELA benchmark.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a 1% overall decrease from the 2022-2023 school-wide results. • Grade 7 - 74% / Grade 8 - 72% • The 7th grade cohort remained steady at 74%. • The 8th grade cohort experienced a decline of 3% from their 7th grade scores. • Student performance relative to our comparison districts remained strong with scores within 5% of the top scores.
ELA Next Steps for 2024-2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting will focus on individual student performance and growth during the year. • Use of a new testing platform (IXL) to target specific skills related to grammar, vocabulary and reading. • We will continue analyzing data to prioritize specific reading standards for each cohort. • We will continue to collaborate with the elementary schools and the high school to ensure vertical alignment. • Continued collaboration across departments with literacy skills. (Listening in World Language, Research and Inquiry in Social Studies) • Support our One School-One Book program to promote independent reading. • Support co-teaching, specific reading program instruction, ASC tutoring programs, and fine tune our reading intervention model.
Science Expectations by June 2024
By June of 2024, 80 % of students in grades 7&8 will meet or exceed the SBA Science benchmark.
Science Results for 2023-2024
<p>75% of students in grade 8 met or exceeded the NGSS benchmark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a 1% decline from the 2022-2023 school-wide results. • Student performance relative to our comparison districts remained strong. Our scores were within 2% of the top score.
Science Next Steps for 2024-2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work within PLCs to streamline units and add or revise phenomena to ensure student relevancy and engagement. • Focus on assessment practices to make sure they are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. This includes work on summative and formative assessments. • Use teacher goal setting to improve the ability of students to have productive science conversations and support arguments with data.

Goal 2: **Compassionate & Connected School Culture**

Simsbury Public Schools will engage our students and adults in an inclusive, responsive, and safe environment that fosters the development of empathetic, ethical, and resilient community members.

Strategic Action Steps

Positive and Safe School Climate

- School-wide goal for all teachers and students to contribute actively to our positive school culture by creating ‘ROAR’ goals at the start of the year.
- All members of the school community will commit proactively to greater communication about “The HJ Way” behavioral tenets and expectations and demonstrate Lion Pride.
- HJMS staff will coordinate with PTC and other stakeholders to develop and implement student and parent programming to educate the HJMS community about issues pertaining to student social and emotional safety.
- The School Climate Committee will focus on the education and celebration of our diverse community.
- The School Social Emotional Learning Committee will focus on ensuring the CASEL standards guide our work in Wellness and Connections, as well as advising on our rebranding of the HJ Way.
- The Support Services Team will meet monthly to monitor attendance, discipline, and develop specific action plans for students of concern.
- Staff will engage in professional development on climate and culture, equity, and restorative disciplinary practices.
- The school safety committee will meet throughout the year to identify ways to improve procedures and practices related to school security.

Performance Indicators (as measured by...)

- Stakeholder Survey Results
- Disciplinary Data
- Attendance Data
- Every student/staff member establishes a ROAR goal

SMART Goals: (Specific/Measurable/Aggressive yet Achievable/Relevant/Time-Bound)

Compassionate and Connected School Culture

The following questions were included in a June 2024 student survey used to track school culture. Goals were set for students to respond positively at the following percentages.

- I feel that I am safe at school. Greater than 80%.
- I feel that I belong. Greater than 70%.
- I can ask an adult if I have a problem. Greater than 80%

The following targets will be used to measure school culture.

- 100% of students and staff establish Roar Goals.
- Greater than 90% of students will have received a positive recognition from HJMS.
- Greater than 90% of students will have had 1 or no office based disciplinary sanctions.
- 90% of students will be in attendance for at least 95% of the school-year.

Compassionate and Connected School Culture Results for 2023-2024

- I feel that I am safe at school. 67.4% (93.4% including neutral)
- I feel that I belong. 61.7% (86.35% including neutral)
- I can ask an adult if I have a problem. 62.1% (92.1% including neutral)
- ‘Homework’ has been traditionally one of the most commented about subjects in the open ended comments. This year there was only one reference to the topic.
- 100% of HJMS students and staff established ROAR goals.
- 100% of students received positive recognition through Connections Postcards sent home, team tickets, and school-wide paws.
- 94% of HJMS students had fewer than 2 office based disciplinary sanctions.
- 95.6% of HJMS students were in attendance for at least 95% of the school year.

Compassionate and Connected School Culture Next Steps for 2024-2025

- Continue the school-wide goal for all teachers and students to contribute actively to our positive school culture by creating ‘ROAR’ goals at the start of the year.
- Increase the cafeteria and hallway presence of teachers during unstructured times.
- Continue the work of our parent conferences committee with a target of holding mid-year conferences in January of 2025.
- Continue our parent education series in partnership with the PTC.
- Climate & Culture, SEL and Safety committees will use survey data to analyze trends and inform our strategic planning.
- All members of the school community will commit proactively to greater communication about “The HJ Way” by using our Behavior Matrix to communicate behavioral tenets and expectations.
- Integrate the district-wide Encouraging Words campaign with our HJ Way and Connections lessons.
- Integrate the district-wide implementation of Everyday Speech into the Wellness curriculum.
- Meet weekly with our support services team to adjust school-wide climate and culture issues/policies in real time based on our current attendance and disciplinary data .

We look forward to developing our 2024-2025 strategic plan and sharing our successes and continuous improvement goals with you. **Thank you for partnering with us!**