

EDUCATION



Woodstock has an excellent overall educational program but continues to address challenges that are currently faced by Vermont schools. Statewide property taxes for school funding implemented in 1998 have forced creative methods of supporting local education. After declines in enrollment at WES in the early 2000s, population has remained steady. A decline in Woodstock school age population have decreased the total numbers at Woodstock Union High School/Middle Schools, but due to increased enrollment from area towns and tuition students, overall population remains steady.

In the 2006-07 school year Woodstock Union High School saw a new principal and vice-principal. The new principal presented his vision to the Woodstock Union High School/ Middle School school board which included three major goals. First, that Woodstock Union High School will actively engage the greater community in the life of the school. Second, that Woodstock Union High School will build student support structures to ensure academic success. And, third, that Woodstock Union High School will distinguish itself by expanding on its existing strengths and cultivating new ideas.

Additional space requirements are necessary at both Woodstock Union High School/Middle School to accomplish program expansions and further student enrichment. There is a commitment at all levels to maintaining a high quality of programs including arts, music and athletic programs. Advanced Placement courses at the high school level and enrichment and foreign language programs at the elementary level are seen as important components of the curriculum.

Woodstock encourages the Elementary School to maintain a village location. Recent playground improvements and paving of the staff parking area are part of an ongoing grounds improvement. In 2013, the Woodstock Elementary School playground was rebuilt as a "Learning Landscape" with private community donations. Woodstock Union High School/Middle School is currently reconfiguring fields on the high school property to accommodate current needs.

Because of the present age of buildings, equipment and materials, an annual program of upgrade

and replacement should be reviewed each year. The Woodstock Union High School/Middle School and Woodstock Elementary School boards support upgrading technology.

The Woodstock Elementary School has served the children of Woodstock at the present site since 1957. The school houses students in grades kindergarten through six and has had enrollments as high as 390. Enrollment in the early 2010's has been steady, around 180 students annually. The school has always provided a wide array of programs to enrich and support student learning across the spectrum. Community involvement is very high. Parents and other community members volunteer their time on a regular basis.

Woodstock Union Middle School serves district students for seventh and eighth grade. In 2010, 187 students attended Woodstock Union Middle School with 18% of the students paying reduced lunch prices. The ratio of students to teachers at Woodstock Union Middle School is 11:1.

Woodstock Union High School is a comprehensive, fully accredited public high school offering a course of studies for four years as described by the Department of Education in Vermont. The district is composed of the six towns: Barnard, Bridgewater, Pomfret, Reading, Sherburne, and Woodstock and our school also accepts tuition students from other towns. Woodstock Union High School participates in Vermont's School Choice Program. The approximate student enrollment for the 2011-12 school years was 364 and the pupil-teacher ratio was 7:1. With changing demographics, Woodstock residents are no longer majority of the students at Woodstock Union High School. Woodstock has approximately 30% of the total population with tuition students from neighboring towns outside the district providing almost as many as Woodstock. In 2012, Woodstock Union High School was awarded a Silver Medal in the U.S. News and World Report Best High Schools ranking.

There is a commitment at all levels to maintaining a high quality of programs including arts, music and athletic programs. Advanced Placement courses at the high school level and enrichment and foreign language programs at the elementary level are seen as important components of the curriculum. Community groups and organizations offer support through programs and activities at Woodstock Union High School/Middle School such as place based learning in cooperation with the Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park.

The current Woodstock Elementary School action plan is available on the school website and includes goals and strategies for the current year as well as the mission and vision statements. It is updated annually. Current school-wide initiatives and commitments include responsive classroom, technology integration and health education. In 2011-12 Woodstock Elementary School completed a Safe Routes to School assessment program which encouraged offsite solutions to making the community more accessible to walkers and bikers. Fund-raising for major grounds revitalization will take place in school year 2012-13. Woodstock encourages the Elementary School to maintain a village location.

The current action plan for Woodstock Union High School is available on their website and includes goals and action items for the current school year. The action plan includes action steps, time line and means to measure progress.

As a member of the Windsor Central Supervisory Union (WCSU), there is a need for cooperation with surrounding district towns to supply the best solutions to educational problems for the entire area. The Windsor Central Supervisory Union catchment area has a total population of about 7900 with each sending town having a local elementary school. Currently, Windsor Central Supervisory Union has a curriculum coordinator to organize K-12 programs throughout the district. Contracts such as busing and heating are contracted on a supervisory union level. Windsor Central Supervisory Union also employs a Director for Instructional Support Services who coordinates services for students with special needs throughout the district.

As the enrollment at Woodstock Union High School/Middle School has shifted the perception of our "community" has also moved with many organizations and businesses recognizing the significance of the cohesive quality of the supervisory union. Woodstock increasingly identifies as the "Woodstock area" which includes all the towns within the supervisory union. A big challenge is addressing how these non-residents, who contribute to the economic base, are integrated into the community.

The passage of H.771 in the 2011-12 legislative session modestly expands public high school choice in Vermont. Geographic boundaries are removed, and enrollment rules are a bit broader. At this time it is unsure what the impact will be on the local school system, but it does indicate that our schools will need to stay competitive.

ACTION PLAN

The following are the identified goals with corresponding objectives and actions for resolution. Those actions with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1 - Support the upgrading and reorganization of programs and activities at the Woodstock Elementary School and Woodstock Union High School/Middle School to adjust for evolving curriculum.

***Objective 1.1.** Support the coordination of the K-12 system to maintain consistent high level standards throughout the Woodstock School system.*

Action 1.1.1. Continue to support coordination of programs within the individual schools and transitions between schools.

***Objective 1.2.** Support the reorganization and upgrading of existing curriculum at Woodstock Elementary School.*

Action 1.2.1. Support the Woodstock Elementary School strategic plan.

Action 1.2.2. Continue to support enrichment and foreign language programs.

***Objective 1.3.** Support the reorganization and upgrading of existing curriculum at Woodstock Union High School/Middle School.*

Action 1.3.1. Support the Woodstock Union High School/Middle School strategic plan.

Action 1.3.2. Continue to support the purchase of new equipment for an

improved technology infrastructure.

Action 1.3.3. Encourage community based work programs for credit.

Objective 1.4. *Help graduates find work in the local area and make a smooth transition into the work world.*

Action 1.4.1. Encourage Woodstock Union High School to assist students in training for and locating job opportunities in the Woodstock area.

Action 1.4.2. Support a career exploration program.

Goal 2 - Support district-wide sharing of resources.

Objective 2.1. *Reduce waste and duplicated efforts.*

Action 2.1.1. District-wide purchasing of supplies and textbooks should be explored and expanded when reasonable.

Objective 2.2. *Explore long term district-wide elementary school options.*

Action 2.2.1. Continue to investigate opportunities for shared facilities and curriculum among the district elementary schools.

Goal 3 - Support facility upgrades and alternative uses for Woodstock Elementary School and Woodstock Union High School/Middle School facilities.

Objective 3.1. *Encourage the use of school facilities for community functions and programs.*

Action 3.1.1. Support the school boards renting and sharing facilities with community organizations.

Objective 3.2. *Support playground enhancements at Woodstock Elementary School.*

Action 3.2.1. Continue necessary improvements to school ground.

Objective 3.3. *Encourage continued use of school facilities as emergency shelters.*

***Action 3.3.1.** Integrate facilities in community emergency plans.

Action 3.3.2. Upgrade generator at Woodstock Union High School.

Goal 4 – Provide for an adequate number of recreational fields for athletic use.

Objective 4.1. *Encourage the provision of an adequate number of recreational fields and play areas in the Town for use by Woodstock Elementary School and Woodstock Union High School/Middle School.*

***Action 4.1.1.** Maintain the fields for use within intermediate and long-term plans.

Goal 5 - Provide alternative education programs for adults and students in the Woodstock area.

Objective 5.1. *Support Hartford VoTech programs*

Action 5.1.1. Maintain existing cooperative agreements including busing arrangements.

Goal 6 - Attain a 0% illiteracy rate in the Woodstock area.

Objective 6.1. Monitor the need for English as a Second Language

Action 6.1.1. Continue to survey students for primary language spoken at home.

Action 6.1.2. Continue to provide services for English as a Second Language

Action 6.1.3. Look for outside resources to implement.

Goal 7- Provide safe and adequate transportation for students.

Objective 7.1. Consider pedestrian safety at Woodstock Elementary School and Woodstock Union High School/Middle School.

Action 7.1.1. Provide adequate sidewalks for village children to walk safely to Woodstock Elementary School and the Recreation Center.

***Action 7.1.2.** Provide adequate sidewalks for Woodstock Union High School/Middle School students to walk safely to activities in West Woodstock such as retail shops and playing fields.

Action 7.1.3. Investigate a school traffic zone in West Woodstock.

Objective 7.2. Consider a safe bike route between Woodstock Union High School and the Village of Woodstock.

***Action 7.2.1.** Build a bicycle route between the high school and the Village of Woodstock.

Objective 7.3. Support the provision of expanded access to the high school and elementary school.

Action 7.3.1. Provide bus runs later in the day between the high school, elementary school, library and the teen center.

Goal 8 - Enhance public confidence in faculty / staff.

Objective 8.1. Encourage ongoing professional development and enrichment.

Action 8.1.1. Support and encourage continuing educational opportunities for faculty/staff.

Action 8.1.2. Provide for periodic review of professional development and skills.

Goal 9 - Engage students, parents, faculty and administration in the greater Woodstock area.

Objective 9.1. Improve communication within the school community.

Action 9.1.1. Support school-wide use of email and Edline at Woodstock Union High School/Middle School.

Action 9.1.2. Continue daily updating of Woodstock Union High School/Middle School website for calendar and special announcements.

Objective 9.2. Engage the greater community in the life of the schools.

Action 9.2.1. Support Woodstock Union High School/Middle School administrative, faculty and students visits to elementary schools and elementary visits to Woodstock Union High School/Middle School.

***Action 9.2.2.** Provide opportunities for parents to get involved in the school through tutoring, volunteering and mentoring.

Action 9.2.3. Establish parent/teacher advisory boards.

***Action 9.2.4.** Encourage involvement of seniors and the business community within the schools.

Action 9.2.5. Develop a relationship with the Alumni Association.

Action 9.2.6. Encourage public to stay informed through use of calendar and the school marquee.

Goal 10 - Provide a safe and secure school environment

Objective 10.1. Improve security procedures at school facilities.

Action 10.1.1. Prepare and implement safety standards to allow for a secure environment.

Action 10.1.2. Provide controlled entry points to buildings for Woodstock Union High School/Woodstock Middle School.

Action 10.1.3. Encourage partnership and promotion with Woodstock Police Department.

Action 10.1.4. Complete secondary egress by securing right-of-way to Mill Road.

Goal 11 - Pursue sustainability and reduced energy use in operation of school facilities.

Objective 11.1. Improve efficiency and cut energy costs through energy upgrades.

Action 11.1.1. Complete energy upgrades as directed in energy audit.

Action 11.1.2. Continue to look for grants and outside funding to complete energy upgrades.