



2024-25 District Goals and Strategic Planning Framework

October 22, 2024

Rationale

Our proposed goals provide an “order of operations” where each goal depends on those that precede it:

1. Student attendance is a critical factor in how we ensure that students are being provided with multiple opportunities to learn, are provided access to those opportunities, and are provided with strategic supports for their success in those opportunities.
2. Our work on behalf of our students relies on everyone – families, district and building personnel, the community, and the students themselves – to play a role in supporting the students across the opportunities that we provide them.
3. All of our students can achieve at high levels when everyone involved a) has a collective focus on providing the right learning opportunities, full access to those opportunities, and strategic supports for success in those opportunities, and b) has a belief that all students can succeed.
4. The ability of a student to read and read well is critical for their success in virtually every other area of schooling and life. Prioritizing literacy in every part of our community is critical to student success.
5. Providing our faculty, staff, and administrators with well-designed, evidence-based learning opportunities that will allow them to continue to improve their work on behalf of our students.

Background

- The proposed goals do not reflect the whole of the work that is being done across the district, but instead identify six areas that will be our specific focus for the year.
- Some goals are variations on previous goals as we continue to build/revise plans, review and establish policies, and build/refine systems that more effectively (and efficiently) support the work of teaching and learning.
- Our points of focus and our goals continue to reflect district plans that we continue to develop and refine. These include:
 - Our Theory of Action
 - Professional Development Plan
 - Comprehensive ELL Education Plan
 - Special Education Plan
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan
 - Physical Education Plan
 - Comprehensive School Counseling Plan
 - K-12 Literacy Plan
- Our strategic planning framework continues to evolve based on the plans that the New York State Board of Regents and the State Education Department are putting forward. These include:
 - Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education
 - Changes to accountability
 - Graduation measures initiative
 - Regionalization initiative

Theory of Action

1. IF the primary purpose for schooling is to teach children **how to learn** across a variety of targeted domains, THEN we must make this an explicit area of focus in the recruitment and training of our faculty and staff.
2. IF the **process of learning** is based on consistent principles from cognitive science related to working and long-term memory, THEN we must ensure that students, faculty, staff, and families have a deep understanding of these principles.
3. IF the **effectiveness and longevity of learning** relies heavily upon based practices of instruction and assessment, THEN we must know and understand these practices and establish habits of staying attuned to new evidence.
4. IF the time that we have to provide instruction that will assist students in meeting or exceeding grade level standards is limited, THEN as educators and educational leaders we must act with urgency to find those **methods and assessments that work better** based on consistent evidence.
5. IF our students require **an ever-increasing amount of content knowledge** to further their learning, THEN we must be intentional in choosing the best known learning opportunities and experiences that systematically build knowledge and the associated skills and dispositions that our students need to succeed.
6. IF there are known educational practices and beliefs that do not have a supporting body of evidence and serve as **obstacles to effective teaching and learning**, THEN we are obligated to discontinue these practices in favor of those that are proven to cause learning.
7. IF we expect to cause each of our students to achieve at high level outcomes in their academic, behavioral, and social lives so that they are more fully prepared to be excellent future citizens, THEN **our work must increasingly be intentional, explicit, and systematic.**

Goal 1

- **Goal 1:** The district will reduce **chronic absenteeism to 6%* or less** in each school by using key strategies including:
 - Providing parents/guardians information on what constitutes chronic absenteeism and why we are monitoring it
 - Providing consistent communications with parents/guardians about the importance of daily school attendance and their child(ren)'s attendance
 - Utilizing our building-based MTSS teams to monitor and intervene when students have multiple absences
 - Implementing and monitoring the impact of Primary Project on school attendance for students in grades K-3

The building block that must be in place to meet student achievement and high school graduation goals is attendance. Physically being present in school is one of the most basic conditions for a student's success – if students are not in school, they are not learning what is being taught and could be falling behind in earning the course credits needed to graduate.

**Current average is 7.1%*

Student Attendance: A building block of student achievement

The Brookings Institute

Goal 2

- **Goal 2:** The district will improve our processes for retention of **personnel** in all areas of operations by using key strategies including:
 - Applying lessons learned from exit interview data
 - Improving the quality and effectiveness of professional learning support
 - Providing remuneration for additional duties related to experience
 - Providing effective mentoring for new teachers and administrators
 - Monitoring the implementation of bargaining agreements to determine if changes are needed to improve working conditions
 - Including personnel in district decision making (professional learning plan, district strategic planning, etc.)
 - Collaborating with regional colleagues on strategies that they are finding success with

Improving teacher retention serves to improve the education system as a whole. Teacher turnover is costly, as new teachers must be recruited and trained. If fewer teachers were replaced, then, instead of financing recruitment and training, school districts could spend money on new programs or technology for students. Higher teacher retention means less financial strain and more investment in the tools children need to learn.

Retention disparities can also result in differences in public education that leave select students behind. Low-income students tend to be particularly impacted by this disparity.

Goal 3

- Goal 3: The district will increase **family engagement** with school activities and initiatives using key strategies including:
 - Providing consistent communications, opportunities for workshops, and structured meetings on district planning for parents/guardians
 - Working with district partners including Spring, PTSA, Trailguides, the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation, and other community groups on topics related to improving student academic and behavioral performance
 - Engaging a professional consultant to study our current communications and engagement strategies and process to assist us in developing an action plan for improvement

For decades, research from around the world has shown that parents' involvement in and engagement with their child's education—including through parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher organizations, school events, and at-home discussions about school—can lead to higher student achievement and better social-emotional outcomes.

Does parent involvement really help students? Here's what the research says.

Education Week

Goal 4

- Goal 4: The district will improve academic **outcomes for all students** with a specific focus on accountability subgroups (ELL, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, Latinx) by using key strategies including:
 - Establishing a consistent Tier 1 literacy curriculum for all students in grades K-8
 - Establishing consistent MTSS processes and intervention cycle between school that address specific areas of student performance based on valid and reliable assessments
 - Identifying additional opportunities for learning, remove barriers to accessing those opportunities, and providing evidence-based supports for success for students
 - Developing a district-based Pre-K program and coordinating with existing providers to ensure a strong start for all students
 - Establishing summer jump-start, remedial, and enhancement programs for identified students
 - Establishing consistent MTSS processes and intervention cycle between school that address specific areas of student performance based on valid and reliable assessments
 - Improving our data literacy so as to quickly analyze and apply the lessons learned from our assessments to improve teaching and learning
 - Improving our understanding of the requirements of CR parts 154 and 200, Section 504 and IDEA through professional learning and establishing instructional practices that best meet the needs of students
 - Identifying evidence-based technology tools that will improve student learning and providing specific training to instructional staff on how to best use these tools

Goal 5

- Goal 5: The district will develop a **comprehensive K-12 literacy plan** that improves the outcomes for students by using key strategies including:
 - Providing training to all teachers and administrators on reading instruction (that includes writing and spelling) across K-12 and developing specific plans for integrating this understanding into our classroom practices
 - Providing ongoing training on the effective implementation of Tier 1 curriculum
 - Defining the specific roles of instructional personnel related to the MTSS plan and provide specific training
 - Establishing data collection, analysis, training, and action planning
 - Establishing specific growth targets for students at each grade level
 - Developing horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum, core instruction (T1), differentiation, acceleration(T2), intervention (T2&3) and assessment
 - Establishing consistent time on task for reading in master schedules
 - Establishing a 5-year implementation timeline for K-5 literacy
 - Evaluating and developing a plan for changes needed for 6-8 ELA curriculum

The most fundamental responsibility of schools is teaching students to read. Because reading affects all other academic achievement and is associated with social, emotional, economic, and physical health, it has been the most researched aspect of human cognition.

Goal 6

- **Goal 6:** The district will complete the **Professional Learning Plan** by using key strategies including:
 - Establishing a districtwide representative team to assist in the development of the plan
 - Aligning the plan to the NYSED CR-SE framework, evidence-based practices defined in research
 - Developing support for the district’s CEEP (ENL), Special Education, Physical Education, Comprehensive School Counseling, DEI, New Educator Mentor, and Literacy plans
 - Identifying key principles in the plan that will bring focus to improving educator knowledge of evidence-based instructional, assessment, and support practices for all students with a specific focus on student subgroups
 - Establishing consistent, evidence-based practices for peer and administrator feedback

Teachers make a difference. No matter the phase or school setting, it is the quality of teaching that can make the biggest difference to children’s learning and to their ultimate success in school. As Rauch and Coe explain, it is ‘arguably the single most important thing that teachers and school leaders can focus on to make a difference in children’s learning’. What’s more, the quality of teaching is not fixed: teachers can be improved, and they can be improved via effective professional development.

***Effective Professional Development Guidance Report
Education Endowment Foundation***

Next Steps

Once adopted by the board of education, the goals and related information will be added to our strategic planning document that includes point persons and accountability measurements for each goal. The district will then convene the strategic planning committee to begin work on the multi-year plan.

Initiatives Impacting Our Work and Strategic Planning

In developing the upcoming strategic plan, the district will consider, integrate where possible, and, where necessary, explicitly address policy, program, and planning initiatives at the following levels:

- **Federal** including changes to Title IX, COPPA, and DEI
- **State** including graduation measures, foundation aid, school accountability measures, student members of boards of education, and cell phone management
- **Local** including property assessment updates and BOCES regionalization
- **District** including transportation and demographic studies, facilities planning including project 2032 and required plan development