



Dear Dobbs Ferry Community,

As we ring in the New Year, our administrators, faculty and staff will be busier than ever. We are anticipating exciting and industrious winter/spring terms for our students and the Dobbs Ferry schools. Over the coming months, we will be developing, finalizing and transitioning to our new 5-year Strategic Plan, that will guide our schools through the year 2029. It will enable us to plan for today and the future.

In our recent “State of the District” Community Forum, I spoke about a number of areas of focus that will dovetail with the District’s subsequent Strategic Plan. As part of this work, we are in the process of mapping to identify and address how we can improve as an educational organization. Those areas of focus include:

- Developing *teaching and learning opportunities* that better advantage *all* of our students
- Continuing to work intentionally to *develop and maintain a positive school culture and climate*
- *Establishing specific performance goals* and strategically planning for how we will accomplish those goals
- *Establishing long-range plans* that will guide our work and planning
- Developing and strengthening our systems that will allow us to operate more effectively and efficiently
- Continuing our own learning that allows us to get better at getting better
- Developing, following, and revising policy support of all of the above

If we can be intentional and impactful in these key focus areas, we can fulfill our overarching mantra **to provide the best possible learning experiences and outcomes for our students.**

Providing program opportunities to enhance academic proficiency and growth is key. Learning to read (and spell and write!) and have curriculum choices in the class and outside of the classroom helps students become all-around individuals. Teaching, modeling and promoting positive behavior builds character. Maintaining a safe, secure, welcoming and affirming environment where all feel welcomed and that they belong, goes a long way to achieving academic success and social-emotional-behavioral objectives.

Beginning in January, we will also be working with the School Board’s Finance Committee on our proposed 2024-2025 school budget. We have developed a rigorous budget development process that will allow us to build a sustainable budget to support these outlined areas of focus. In addition, measuring progress toward specific goals is important to gauge our success and determine where and how we can readily improve. We are in the business of education and are using a “return on investment” lens to see targeted growth in these designated areas.

We also want to continue communicating with you by having two-way, open and transparent conversations, and delivering needed factual information in a timely and easily accessible way. Our school-home connection is an important partnership and benefits the entire Dobbs Ferry community.

The Dobbs Ferry school family has a lot to look forward to in 2024, and we want to wish everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!

Sincerely,

Ken Slentz Superintendent