

Dear Dobbs Ferry Community,



It has been exactly a year since I had the pleasure of joining the Dobbs Ferry Schools as Superintendent, and for me the impending excitement of the first day of school never wears off. I am truly thrilled to welcome our students, teachers, staff and parents back to school for the 2023-2024 academic year and anticipate great learning opportunities and experiences for our students in the year ahead.

Once again, the District will have many new faces in September among the administration, faculty and staff, and all of us will be learning right along with our students. As an educational organization, we are fully committed to creating a healthy, safe and supportive environment for teaching and learning and maintaining our commitment to “getting better at getting better”.

At our New Teacher and Staff Orientation and our Superintendent Conference Days prior to the opening of school, I stated my confidence that as a District we are doing so many things right for our students that are producing positive outcomes, but I followed this with a question that I will continually return to: are we doing good enough for enough of our students? While we are all committed to the successes of our students in the classroom, on the stage, in the fields, and on the courts, are we *causing learning* to occur each and every day that will allow our students to move beyond success, and *thrive* in what they are doing?

To that end, the District’s current 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, and our Strategic Goals from the 2022-2023 school year, in addition to our students’ lived experiences in school, will lay the foundation for the next 3-to-5-year Strategic Plan. We are currently in the process of drafting a framing document that will help guide the development of the subsequent plan. This is an important roadmap that outlines where our District is heading and what goals we expect to reach. Along the way, we will be establishing benchmarks for teachers and students, strategies to attain the various goals and quarterly progress status reports to monitor how we’re doing in meeting those targets. Those Strategic Plan strands include:

- Maintaining an intentional focus on Teaching and Learning
- Actively creating Safe, Secure and Welcoming Facilities
- Ensuring that each of our students experiences a Safe, Welcoming and Affirming Learning Environment
- Continuing to foster and expecting a Culture of Continuous Improvement
- Thoughtfully Recruiting, Developing and Retaining Excellent Employees who reflect the diversity that exists within our schools and community
- Developing and maintaining Long-Range Financial and Facilities Planning

This fall we will be inviting students, staff, parents, and community members to join our Strategic Planning Team to assist in the development of the next plan. We will also develop a communication plan to inform parents and the community of these goals and our progress. Transitioning to the new Strategic Plan will be a key focus for the 2023-2024 school year.

I’m looking forward to mapping out this blueprint for our Dobbs Ferry School District together, and hope to see many of you in person on September 5th.

Sincerely,

Ken Slentz
Superintendent