



# **Welcome to the 2025-26 School Year**

***Creating the Conditions for Effective  
Teaching and Learning***

**August 27, 2025**

# DFSD Mission

The Dobbs Ferry School District strives to develop independent, curious, and open-minded learners who think critically, work collaboratively, act ethically, and are knowledgeable about the world around them.

# DFSD Vision

*Independent Thinkers Prepared to Change the World.*

Critical, *interdependent* elements of our *Vision* include our Core Values:

- Providing a ***high-quality and challenging curriculum*** with the depth, breadth, and relevance.
- Fostering the unique abilities of ***each student***.
- Utilizing the most effective and ***evidence-based/informed*** instructional approaches and technological advances.
- Encouraging students to meet their challenges – whether academic, athletic, or artistic – with openness, enthusiasm, and a ***willingness to take risks***.
- Recruiting, retaining, and developing ***high-quality faculty and staff***.
- ***Celebrating and learning from the diversity*** of our students and the greater Dobbs Ferry community.

# Welcoming Our Students

Category	2002-03	2012-13	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Enrollment	1,329	1,466	1,514	1,492	1,481	1,434 SH = 621 (10-year avg = 693) MS = 361 HS = 452
%White	79.8%	68%	63%	63%	63%	TBD (BEDS Day)
%Black/AA	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	TBD (BEDS Day)
%Hispanic/Latino	5.8%	15%	20%	20%	20%	TBD (BEDS Day)
%ANHOPI	10.5%	9%	6%	6%	6%	TBD (BEDS Day)
%Economically Disadvantaged*	7.5%	10%	16%	18%	20%	TBD (BEDS Day)
%Special Education	8.7%	12%	14%	14%	13%	TBD (BEDS Day)
%LEP/ELL/FELL	4.8%	3%	2%	2%	5%	TBD (BEDS Day)

\*A student who participates in, or whose family participates in, economic assistance programs, such as the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Programs; Social Security Insurance (SSI); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Foster Care; Refugee Assistance (cash or medical assistance); Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP); Safety Net Assistance (SNA); Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); or Family Assistance: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). If one student in a family is identified as low income, all students from that household (economic unit) may be identified as low income.

# How Do We Conduct Our Work?

To create *Independent Thinkers Who Can Change the World*, we must work ***intentionally*** to:

- Create and maintain safe, secure, and welcoming buildings, classrooms, and cultures.
- Ensure through ***explicit*** instruction that EACH of our students can read and achieve at or above grade level.
- ***Systematically*** maximize instructional time with/for each of our students.
- Commit to ***continuous improvement*** each day.
- Provide our students and staff with ***predictability and consistency***.

# Time...

- The resource that we need the most, but have the least of.
- Our most important choices are how we use the time that we have in providing opportunities to learn.
- Making informed decisions minimizes opportunity costs to students and their learning.
  - ***But what informs our decisions?***
    - Our experience and our humility
    - The experience of others who have been created the conditions for successful student learning outcomes
    - Research

# Background

- Our strategic planning framework continues to evolve based on our priorities, educational research, and the policies and plans that the New York State Board of Regents and the State Education Department are putting forward. These include:
  - The four *Principles* of the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education framework
  - Changes to accountability measures
  - Graduation Measures (NY Inspires) initiative
  - Literacy and Mathematics Initiatives

# Rationale

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

- ***STUDENT ATTENDANCE*** is a critical factor in ensuring 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.
  - Remain focused on providing a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for teaching and learning.
  - Continue to monitor and act on chronic absenteeism while implementing the new attendance measures from NYSED.
- ***ALL OF OUR STUDENTS CAN ACHIEVE SUCCESS AT HIGH LEVELS*** when everyone involved a) has a collective focus on providing the best learning opportunities, full access to those opportunities, and strategic supports for success in those opportunities, and b) has a collective belief that all students can succeed.
  - Focus on improved student outcomes, specifically student growth and particularly for student subgroups
    - Selection of evidence-based assessments and qualitative measures



# Rationale

- ***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 at high levels.
  - K-5 Implementation of Bookworms, 6-8 pilots and explicit instruction in key areas, 9-12 MTSS work
- ***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.
  - Monitoring the alignment of requests for professional learning and training with the goals and parameters set in the professional learning plan.
- ***OUR WORK ON BEHALF OF OUR STUDENTS RELIES ON EVERYONE*** including families, district and building personnel, our partner organizations, and the larger community, to play an active role in supporting our students across the opportunities that we provide them.

# Goal 1

- **Goal 1:** Each school in the district will achieve **level 4 attendance rate (95%)** for at least 95% of our students. in each school by using key strategies including:
  - Monitoring and acting on instances of chronic absenteeism
  - Surveying families to understand reasons for absences
  - Providing parents/guardians information on what constitutes an absence 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, and providing resources to assist them in getting their child to school each day
  - Utilizing our building-based MTSS teams to monitor and intervene when students have multiple absences
  - Increasing the co- and extracurricular opportunities based on student requests
  - Monitoring research and area districts to identify promising practices in improving attendance

# Goal 2

- **Goal 2:** The district will **improve academic outcomes for all students** as measured by a 5% increase in student growth percentiles for all students using key strategies that include:
  - Establishing a consistent Tier 1 literacy and mathematics curriculum for all students in grades K-8
  - Identifying and enhancing evidence-based instructional practices
  - Identifying evidence-based technology tools that will improve student learning and providing specific training to instructional staff on how to best use these tools
  - 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
  - Identifying additional opportunities for learning, removing barriers to accessing those opportunities, and providing evidence-based supports for success for students
  - 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 barriers to student learning and developing plans to remove the barriers

# Goal 3

- **Goal 3:** The district will retain 95% of **personnel** in all areas of operations by using key strategies including:
  - Applying lessons learned from exit interview data
  - Providing employees with feedback on performance and, where necessary, explicit expectations for improvement
  - 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, district curriculum council, etc.)
  - Collaborating with regional colleagues on strategies that they are finding success with
  - Administering staff satisfaction surveys and suggestions for improvement based on working conditions

# Goal 4

- **Goal 4:** The district will increase satisfaction with **family engagement** with school activities and initiatives by at least 10% using key strategies including:
  - Surveying families on their satisfaction with the level of engagement across the district in key operational areas at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year
  - Developing plans and strategies to address common concerns shown in the survey data
  - 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
  - Reviewing research on promising practices for family engagement in schools

***Thank You!!***



***Wishing you all a GREAT year ahead!***