



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Superintendent Opening Remarks

Tony B. Watlington, Sr., Ed. D.
Superintendent

May 25, 2023



Overview

1. Superintendent Update
2. Immediate Priorities Update
3. Strategic Plan Presentation
4. Q&A



Superintendent Update

District Recognition



The District recognizes 60 teachers, who will receive the prestigious Lindback Award for the 2022 - 2023 school year.

Deputy Superintendent of Talent, Strategy, and Culture

- **The Deputy Superintendent of Talent, Strategy, and Culture will be responsible for:**
 - Overhauling our recruiting strategy
 - Reducing onboarding time for new hires
 - Training, developing, and retaining staff across all job roles
 - Developing an evaluation system for all central office departments
 - Developing a strategic staffing plan with recruitment, performance, and retention incentives
 - Assisting the superintendent in transforming the district into a more collaborative, trusted, and results oriented culture
- **The Deputy Superintendent of Talent, Strategy, and Culture role will oversee the following offices:**
 - Office of Talent
 - Office of Professional Learning
 - Office of Equity
 - Office of Information Technology
 - Office of Strategic Planning
 - Other TBD



Jeremy Grant Skinner

**Deputy Superintendent of Talent,
Strategy, and Culture**

Deputy Superintendent of Academics

TBD

Deputy Superintendent of Academics

- **The candidate will responsible for:**
 - Driving the District's academic strategy
 - Accelerating student academic achievement
 - Achieving the Board's Goals and Guardrails

- **Pending CGCS Audit feedback, the candidate will supervise:**
 - Office of Elementary Schools
 - Office of Secondary Schools
 - Office of Curriculum and Instruction
 - Office of Special Education and Diverse Learners
 - Office of Student Support
 - Other TBD

Chief of Curriculum and Instruction

- **The Chief of Curriculum and Instruction will be responsible for:**
 - Providing leadership on the overall instructional programming for the School District of Philadelphia.
 - Ensuring that teachers, principals, and support across all schools have access to the core instructional materials and support needed to provide rigorous and culturally appropriate instruction for all students.



Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson
Chief of Curriculum of Instruction

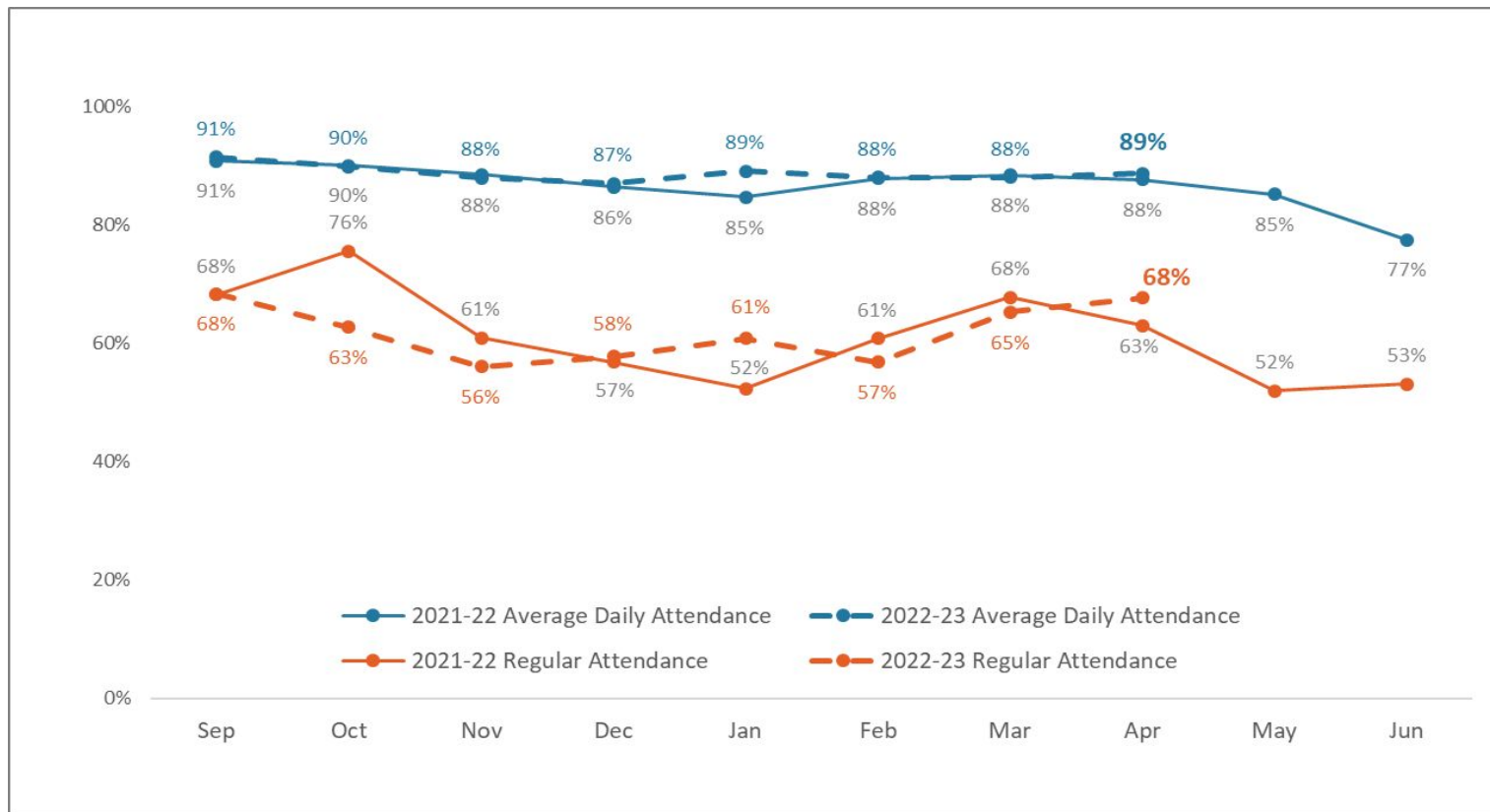
A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher with dark hair and bangs, wearing a blue button-down shirt, stands on the right side of the frame, smiling and holding a tablet computer. Several young students are seated at desks in the foreground and middle ground, with their hands raised in the air, indicating an interactive lesson. The classroom is decorated with colorful alphabet banners (A-Z) and various educational posters on the walls. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

Immediate Priorities

- Increase School Safety
- Increase Student Attendance
- Increase Teacher Attendance
- Decrease Dropouts

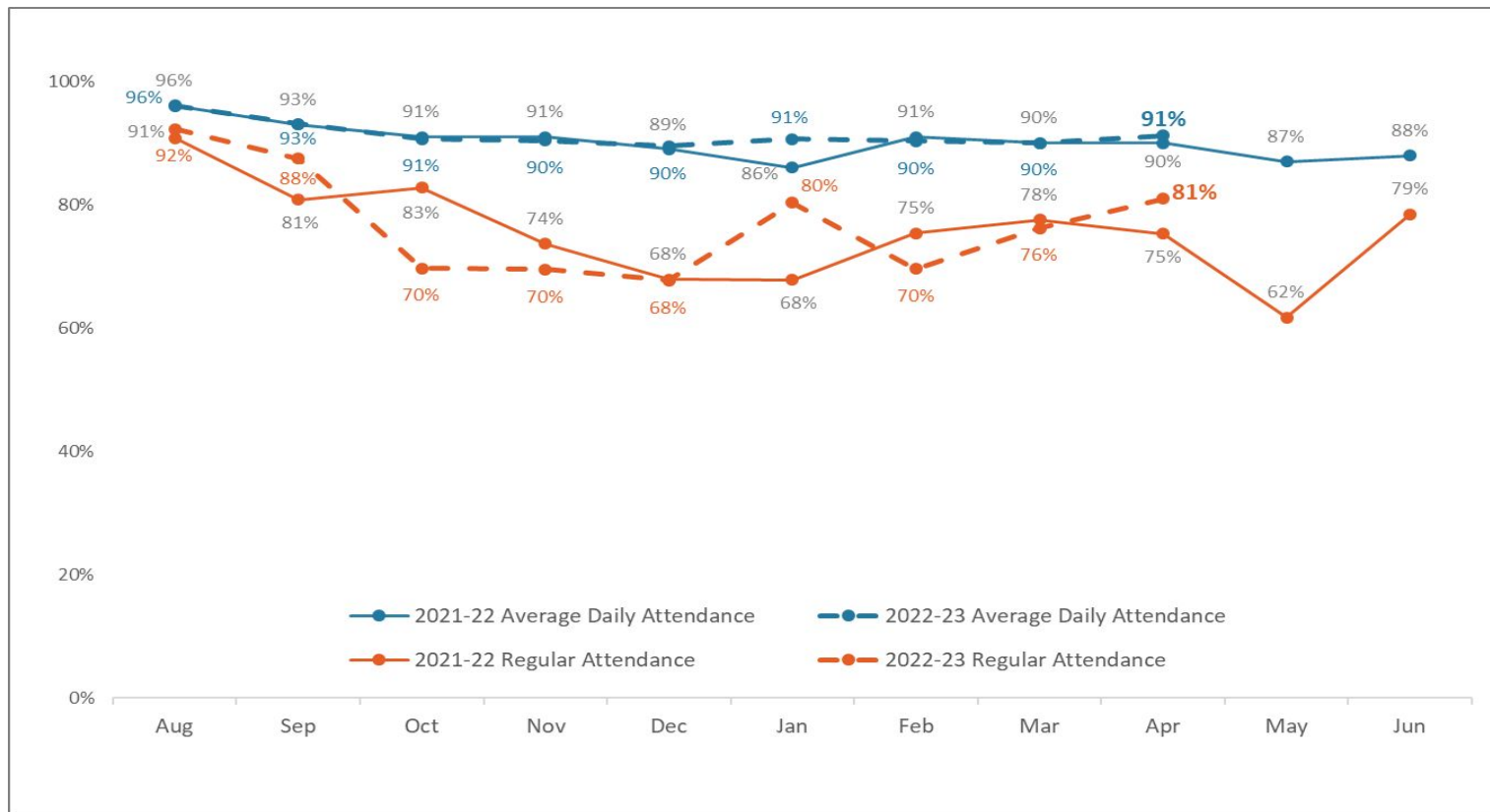
District-Wide

Student Attendance Within Month: 2021-22 & 2022-23



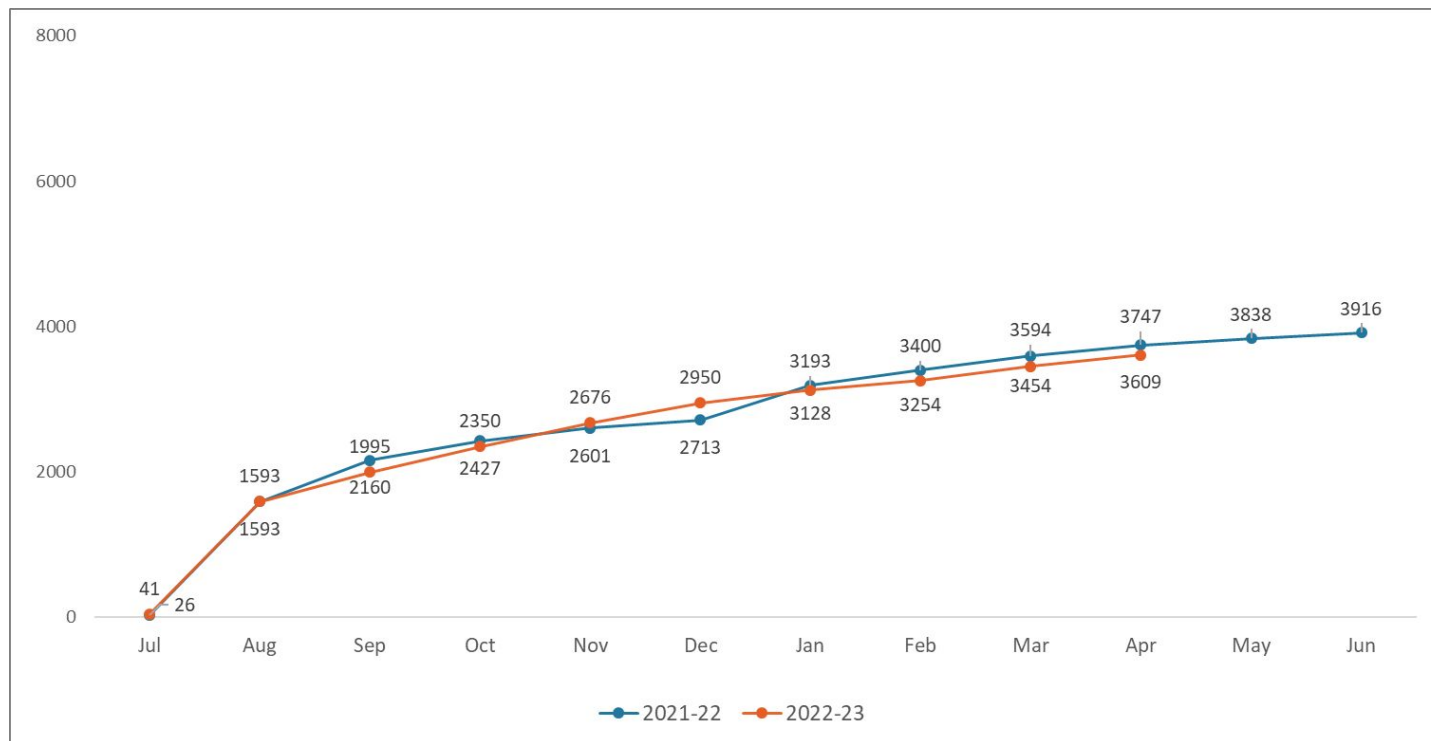
District-Wide

Teacher Attendance Within Month: 2021-22 & 2022-23



District-Wide

Dropouts Cumulative: Grades 7-12, 2021-22 & 2022-23



The cumulative by month dropout number includes students in grades 7-12, consistent with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) “event” dropout rates reported annually. Unlike the annual PDE rate, SDP uses actual enrollment within month, as opposed to the October 1 snapshot enrollment at the end of the year. Students are attributed to the last location they were enrolled. These calculations include students in District, alternative and non-public placements. Students counted as dropouts are tracked on a rolling bases, so monthly totals may change throughout the year.



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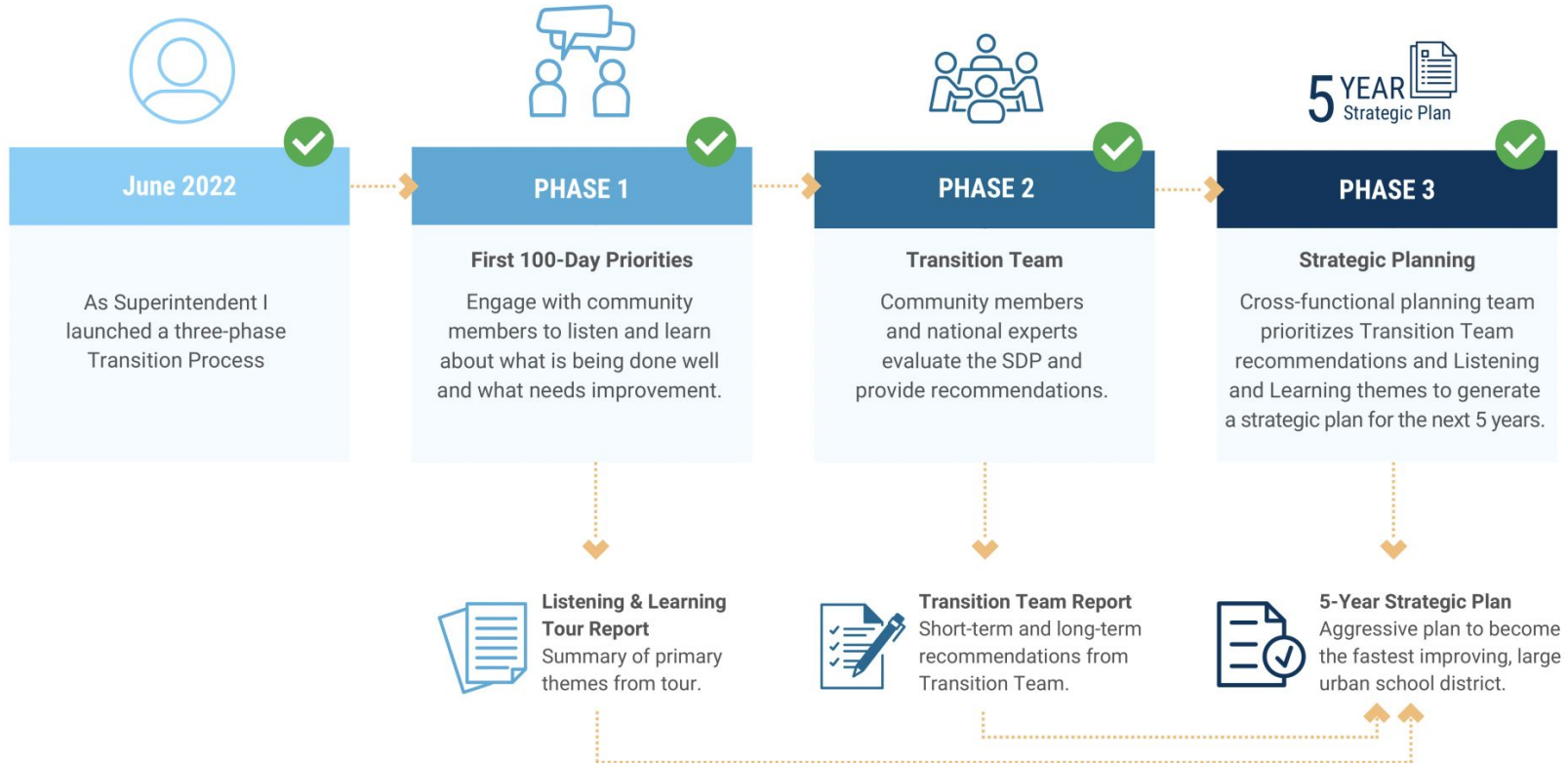
ACCELERATE PHILLY

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

May 24, 2023

Tony B. Watlington, Sr., Ed. D.
Superintendent

Year - 1 Transition Process



Year 1: Focus and Progress

Worked collaboratively to align the organization to accelerate progress

"Nothing for me without me"

Year 1 Focus

- Listen and learn, assess the District, and collaborate with families, unions, and community members to develop a strategic plan
- Align people and resources to build needed capacity
- Focus on key priorities to improve student outcomes

Year 1 Progress

- Engaged over 3,300 stakeholders through listening/learning tour, transition team, and strategic planning process
- Reorganized District office
- Strengthened communication internally and externally
- Focused on safety, teacher attendance, student attendance, reducing dropout rates
- Launched Act 158 graduation requirements
- Launched mental and socio-emotional services for students and staff

Year 1 Progress

Safety

+7

Added 7 schools to the Safe Path program for a total of 13

Student Attendance

+5%

Student attendance up 5%-points in April 2023 versus April 2022

Teacher Attendance

+6%

Teacher attendance up 6%-points in April 2023 versus April 2022

Student Dropouts

-138

138 fewer dropouts in grades 7-12 through April 2023 versus April 2022

ACT 158

87%

87% of students are meeting ACT 158 and local graduation requirements as of May 19*

**this is not the 4-year graduation rate*

Year 2 Preview: Path Forward



Accelerate progress to improve academic achievement and school climate

- “Focus on focus”
- Launch research-based strategies
- Stagger implementation
- Execute with fidelity

Vision, Mission, & Core Values

Vision

To prepare students to imagine and realize any future they desire.

Mission

All sectors of public education in Philadelphia will work with urgency to provide every student with the opportunity to achieve positive life outcomes in partnership with diverse families, educators, and community members who are valued and respected.

Core Values

Safety is imperative to our work.

Equity requires needs-based distribution of resources.

Collaboration involves gathering and honoring community voices.

Joy inspires active engagement and belonging.

Trust is built through good communication, public transparency, and holding ourselves accountable.

Ambition requires us to work with urgency to accelerate student achievement.

Theory of Action



When we focus on...

- **Engaging** with families and community members in the education of all students;
- **Prioritizing** the social-emotional well-being, mental health, and intellectual and physical safety of all students and staff;
- **Centering** schools and school leadership teams as the units of change;
- **Advancing** equity through everything we do and every decision we make; and
- **Aligning** our resources, trainings, and accountability structures to a limited number of innovative and research based priorities

Then we will reach the Goals and Guardrails and transform learning and life outcomes for all students.

A photograph of a graduate in a red cap and gown hugging a woman. The graduate is wearing glasses and has a joyful expression. The woman being hugged has long, dark, curly hair. In the background, another graduate in a red cap and gown is visible, holding a large, light-colored envelope or diploma. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

5 Priority Areas & 62 Strategic Actions

Strategic Plan Priority Areas



Priority 1: Improve safety and well-being
(physical, social-emotional, and environmental)



Priority 2: Partner with families and community



Priority 3: Accelerate academic achievement



Priority 4: Recruit & retain diverse and highly effective educators



Priority 5: Deliver efficient, high-quality, cost-effective operations

Priority 1: Improve safety and well-being (physical, social-emotional, and environmental)

- **1.1** Establish a facilities master plan project team, including internal and external stakeholders, to identify a process and the investments needed to significantly improve academic achievement and to achieve Guardrails 1 and 2.
- **1.2** Improve management of environmental conditions and hazards by hiring an administrator and investing in a modern data management system.
- **1.3** Replace all analog security cameras at 150 schools.
- **1.4** Pilot and evaluate Opengate weapons detection technology for stand-alone middle schools.
- **1.5** Expand the Safe Path Program in partnership with foundations and city and state funders.
- **1.6** Develop a bridge program for students transitioning back from placement at Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center, Pennypack House, and other long term placements.

Priority 1: Improve safety and well-being (physical, social-emotional, and environmental)

- 1.7 Identify, audit, and improve school climate programs.
- 1.8 Identify, audit, and improve mental and behavioral health services in partnership with the City of Philadelphia.
- 1.9 Recruit and retain certified school nurses for all schools to provide in person or telehealth services depending on student need.
- 1.10 Implement Breakfast After the Bell at all schools and offer sufficient, healthy, and appetizing food during appropriate meal times to all students.
- 1.11 Implement recess supervised by trained staff and aligned to national best practices for all K-8 students.

Priority 2: Partner with families and community

- 2.1 Launch a two-way communications system to improve communications with families and the community.
- 2.2 Update the District and school websites.
- 2.3 Launch a Superintendent's parent and guardian advisory group.
- 2.4 Launch a Superintendent's teacher advisory group.
- 2.5 Launch a Superintendent's principal advisory group.
- 2.6 Relaunch a Superintendent's student advisory group.

Priority 2: Partner with families and community

- 2.7 Launch a Superintendent's advisory group with external stakeholders and community partners.
- 2.8 Create a database of all District partnerships, their alignment to the strategic plan, and impact.
- 2.9 Relaunch Parent University to provide resources and support to families and community.
- 2.10 Establish a parent ambassador role (with paid stipends).
- 2.11 Evaluate and replicate successful Community School models.

Priority 3: Accelerate academic achievement

- **3.1** Inventory and improve access to high quality Pre-K programs for underserved populations.
- **3.2** Purchase and implement standards-aligned core instructional resources for math (in partnership with teachers, school leaders, and parents/guardians).
- **3.3** Purchase and implement standards-aligned core instructional resources for English Language Arts (ELA), with a focus on the Science of Reading (in partnership with teachers, school leaders, and parents/guardians).
- **3.4** Purchase and implement standards-aligned core instructional resources for science (in partnership with teachers, school leaders, and parents/guardians).
- **3.5** Pilot evidence-based high impact tutoring in 6 to 8 schools.
- **3.6** Pilot a year round and extended day school calendar in up to 10 schools.
- **3.7** Pilot learn to swim programs in different parts of the city in alignment with the curriculum.

Priority 3: Accelerate academic achievement

- **3.8** Audit and improve compliance with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and expand supports for English Learners.
- **3.9** Provide more support to teachers in the areas of content knowledge, student engagement, and culturally relevant instructional practices.
- **3.10** Establish a baseline standard for which courses, programs, academy models, and co-curricular opportunities will be offered in all schools (Elementary, Middle, and High School).
- **3.11** Develop a project team to recommend optimal middle school design, programming, and facilities.
- **3.12** Appoint an administrator to identify, audit, and improve access for underrepresented students to Career and Technical Education (CTE) and building trades programs across the city in alignment with regional workforce trends.

Priority 3: Accelerate academic achievement

- **3.13** Expand 9th Grade On-Track (Success Networks) to reduce dropouts and increase four year graduation rates.
- **3.14** Hire an administrator to better coordinate a district-wide dropout reduction strategy.
- **3.15** Launch a financial literacy module for all high schools.
- **3.16** Implement quarterly benchmark assessments to provide teachers, parents/guardians, and students with information about learning progress.
- **3.17** Reorganize learning networks to place resources closer to families and communities and to improve student outcomes.
- **3.18** Develop a “rounds model” for central office staff to visit schools, provide support, and debrief feedback.

Priority 4: Recruit and retain diverse and highly effective educators

- 4.1 Establish instructional leadership teams (Assistant Principal, Climate Manager, SBTL Literacy, SBTL Math, Special Education Compliance Monitor) at every school and provide them with training and resources.
- 4.2 Pilot recruitment and retention incentives for teachers and principals to reduce vacancies in hard to staff schools.
- 4.3 Appoint an administrator to audit and analyze staffing data to make recommendations to address long-term District staffing needs.
- 4.4 Develop innovative retention approaches for hard to staff positions.
- 4.5 Recruit more Black and Latino male teachers and principals in partnership with colleges, universities, and the Center for Black Educator Development.

Priority 4: Recruit and retain diverse and highly effective educators

- 4.6 Develop a teacher preparation middle college high school in partnership with colleges, universities, and the Center for Black Educator Development.
- 4.7 Expand “Grow-Your-Own” programs for aspiring teachers and leaders with attention to historically underrepresented groups.
- 4.8 Develop an aligned coaching and feedback model for instructional staff.
- 4.9 Provide ongoing professional development for non-instructional job roles.
- 4.10 Launch surveys that provide principals, Assistant Superintendents, and District leaders with feedback from their direct reports.

Priority 5: Deliver efficient, high-quality, cost-effective operations

- **5.1** Establish a system-wide project management culture to improve organizational coherence, execute the strategic plan, and develop a collaborative, trusted, and results-oriented culture.
- **5.2** Use Council of Great City Schools Central Office Structure audit recommendations to enhance the District organizational structure.
- **5.3** Implement a streamlined onboarding process to improve hiring timelines.
- **5.4** Develop succession plans at all levels of the organization.
- **5.5** Develop a project team to audit and make recommendations for student remote learning and staff remote work.
- **5.6** Develop a performance evaluation system for all Central Office staff.
- **5.7** Launch an annual school leaders survey to provide feedback about Central Office operations.

Priority 5: Deliver efficient, high-quality, cost-effective operations

- **5.8** Extend the operating budget development timeline and use evidence-based budgeting practices to improve collaboration and transparency.
- **5.9** Review the school selection process annually and implement national best practices.
- **5.10** Recruit executive(s) on loan to advise the Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer on facility challenges and operational efficiency.
- **5.11** Provide the staffing, resources, and training necessary to meet school cleanliness standards.
- **5.12** Benchmark District performance against other large urban districts, utilizing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the Council of Great City Schools in: Academics, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Operations.

Next Steps



June 1 **Board of Education votes on the strategic plan**

July 1 **Launch of the strategic plan**



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Thank you and Questions