

DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

A CAPITAL COMMITMENT

2023-2028



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WE ARE WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



OUR LEGACY & OUR FUTURE

A Letter from the Chancellor

To the DC Public Schools Community,

As the school district for the nation's capital, DC Public Schools (DCPS) is a leader in education transformation. Our legacy is defined by an unwavering commitment to student success, deep investments in and from our educators, and vital partnerships with our families and community. Over the past 15 years, we have overcome many challenges to chart a path of progress and secure our position as one of the fastest-growing and most forward-thinking urban school districts in the United States.

We recognize that a strong education relies on a solid foundation, which explains our substantial investments in curriculum and instruction. DCPS is proud to implement proven strategies like the science of reading, postsecondary planning and preparation, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.

In addition to innovation and student-centered methodologies, we have also made significant investments in our most valuable assets—our people. Strategic initiatives such as performance bonuses, professional learning, and advancement opportunities have supported and empowered our educators for the last decade and a half.

Since the founding of America's first public high school for Black students, Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, to current initiatives like Empowering Males of Color (EMOC) and Reign: Empowering Young Women as Leaders, DCPS has worked to address educational disparities and channel resources that elevate and create opportunities for our students. With a particular emphasis on uplifting those students furthest from opportunity, we have consistently pushed

the boundaries of what is possible. Throughout our history, developing pioneering programs and executing plans with a goal of transformative impact on student outcomes has been priority.

To build upon our rich legacy as the fastest-improving urban school district in the nation, DCPS is excited to leverage the wealth of experience gained over the past 15 years to foster a more inclusive and equitable future. By prioritizing evidence-based practices, uplifting creative approaches, and providing the resources for effective teaching and learning, we will continue to enforce a strong educational framework that prepares our students for lifelong success. With what we have learned, we will continue to use data to drive our decision-making and refine strategies to close gaps for all students.

While our journey is sure to include challenges, we are steadfast in our commitment to our students' success at DCPS and beyond. This pursuit of excellence requires collective effort and active stakeholder engagement at all levels to ensure that our educational practices are responsive to the needs of our diverse student body and greater community.

As we look to fulfill our **five-year Strategic Plan: A Capital Commitment 2023-2028**, DCPS remains dedicated to a path forward that ensures every student has the support and resources they need to thrive. Together, we will forge a brighter future for all our students.

In partnership,



Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.

OUR MISSION

Ensure that every school guarantees students reach their **full potential** through **rigorous and joyful learning experiences** provided in a **nurturing environment**.

OUR VISION

Every student feels **loved, challenged, and prepared** to positively influence society and thrive in life.

OUR VALUES



STUDENTS
FIRST



EQUITY



OPERATIONAL
EXCELLENCE



TEAMWORK



COURAGE



JOY



1 ONE Equity Imperative

The success of DCPS' strategic plan is dependent on our ability to serve our students furthest from opportunity. Informed by district-wide data, to meet the goals of our Capital Commitment 2023-2028, it is imperative that we provide intensive, targeted support based on need to eliminate barriers to academic and social success for the following student groups:

- ✔ Black and Hispanic/Latino Students
- ✔ Students Receiving Special Education Services
- ✔ Multilingual Learners

This equity imperative will guide the implementation of our Capital Commitment and ensure that all our students have access to the tools, support, and resources they need to succeed.



2 TWO Commitments

VALUE OUR PEOPLE

Investing in our educators is critical to student success. To demonstrate how we value our people as leaders in educating the next generation, DCPS is committed to boosting professional development, supporting employee wellness, and establishing new pathways for support staff and community members to become educators in our schools.

PARTNER WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Meaningful partnerships with our families, DC Government agencies, local businesses, and community-based organizations are necessary to ensure the safety of students, educators, and staff in our schools, during extracurricular activities, and on their commutes. Together, we are committed to keeping the members of our school communities physically safe and mentally and emotionally supported as we provide access to transformative educational and recreational student experiences across the District.

3 THREE Strategic Priorities



**SUCCEEDING
ACADEMICALLY**



**CONNECTED
TO SCHOOLS**



**PREPARED FOR
WHAT'S NEXT**



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

SUCCEEDING ACADEMICALLY

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

A well-rounded education marked by math excellence and achievement in literacy will be key to unlocking academic success for our students. By focusing on early numeracy, mathematical reasoning, and algebra readiness, we will drive math excellence across the district and prepare students for advanced courses in high school and STEM-focused career opportunities. In addition to an increased focus on math, DCPS students will receive a stronger foundation in literacy, starting in PreK and leading to accelerated outcomes for middle and high school students.

To ensure students are succeeding academically, DCPS will engage students in more hands-on learning experiences, real-world inquiry, and knowledge building that provides opportunities for them to strengthen their math, reading, and writing skills. Our schools will have greater consistency in course offerings, and our educators will be provided with the appropriate resources and support to conduct rigorous grade-level instruction and help students develop a joy for learning—especially in math.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE:

- DCPS students are **mathematically strong**.
- DCPS students are **reading and writing** across all subjects.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE (KEY ACTIONS):

MATH

- ▶ Build early screening and intervention into a robust early numeracy program to ensure PreK-K alignment and maximize the number of students performing on or above grade level by the end of second grade.
- ▶ Cultivate educators' math expertise through high-quality professional learning via the DREAM Learning Center which will provide rigorous, graduate-level coursework and credentials.
- ▶ Build the pathway to eighth-grade Algebra 1 through high-quality, research-based instruction beginning in PreK.
- ▶ Ensure students in every ward have access to the same advanced math, financial literacy, and data science courses.
- ▶ Shift math-related mindsets to build math joy across school communities among students, educators, staff, and families.

LITERACY

- ▶ Integrate literacy into learning experiences across the full PreK-12 curriculum.
- ▶ Design and implement project-based learning across all subjects in third through eighth grades.
- ▶ Design and implement a revised assessment strategy to ensure accurate measurement of progress, identify improvement areas, and facilitate appropriate interventions.
- ▶ Leverage real-world learning across music, art, world languages, health and physical education, library/media, science, and social studies to strengthen student comprehension and development.
- ▶ Integrate career readiness standards, social-emotional skill building, and digital literacy skills into content and curriculum with an emphasis on third through 12th grades.

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL:

- ✔ **Eighty percent** of students pass or **meet/exceed performance expectations** on the state assessments for Math and English Language Arts.
- ✔ **Twice** as many students enroll in **Algebra 1** in middle school.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

CONNECTED TO SCHOOLS

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

There has never been a more important time to ensure our students are safe and feel they are a valued part of the DCPS community. Student safety and well-being are paramount to a successful educational environment.

To ensure students are connected to schools, DCPS will continue to provide safe, supportive, and culturally affirming learning spaces while prioritizing meaningful relationships among students, families, educators, and our greater community.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE:

- DCPS students are **safe and have a sense of belonging**.
- DCPS students have **equitable access** to opportunities.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE (KEY ACTIONS):

- ▶ Create and execute a comprehensive, district-wide operational framework that includes infrastructure, staffing, safety protocols, and robust critical response procedures and training.
- ▶ Re-envision an alternative school model that supports students who demonstrate persistent behavioral risks to the school community.
- ▶ Expand the Connected Schools Initiative.
- ▶ Effectively recruit more school-based support staff.
- ▶ Reinforce Multi-Tiered Systems of Support by providing evidence-based interventions, resources to support collaboration, and deeper integration into existing support structures.
- ▶ Strengthen school supports and expand professional development opportunities for educators and staff to ensure students are learning in a culturally affirming class and school environments.
- ▶ Enhance and design new Cornerstone experiences.
- ▶ Enhance student learning through field trips, performances, celebrations and immersive learning experiences that align to students' interests, and passions.
- ▶ Assess existing afterschool programming—internal and external to DCPS—to identify gaps related to students and schools served, program offerings, and barriers to access.
- ▶ In alignment with My Afterschool DC, develop an evidence-based, district-wide approach to increase afterschool programming.
- ▶ Streamline, clarify, and formalize partner policies and compliance processes.

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL:

- ✔ **Eighty-five percent** of students report they feel **safe and have a sense of belonging**.
- ✔ **Twice** as many **free afterschool enrichment opportunities** are available to middle school students.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

PREPARED FOR WHAT'S NEXT

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

All DCPS students have bright futures ahead of them. With the appropriate support and preparation to help them reach their full potential, our students will graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in postsecondary education, the workforce, and life.

To ensure students are prepared for what's next at every stage, DCPS will guide students through their entire PreK-12 experience. With additional reinforcement for critical grade level transitions, this guidance will include providing individualized planning, multiple pathways, and alumni support.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE:

- DCPS students **graduate on time**.
- DCPS graduates participate in a **postsecondary pathway**.



HOW WE'LL GET THERE (KEY ACTIONS):

- ▶ Design and implement a kindergarten success plan.
- ▶ Launch and implement 6th Grade Academies.
- ▶ Execute a strengthened approach to existing 9th Grade Academies.
- ▶ Design and implement systems for students to create interactive and personalized postsecondary plans.
- ▶ Expand access to and increase enrollment in dual enrollment and high-quality CTE programs, internships, and apprenticeships.
- ▶ Create an inclusive support network for all DCPS graduates regardless of postsecondary pathway.
- ▶ Pilot community-driven high school models and increase opportunities to engage more communities in rigorous and innovative redesign.
- ▶ Establish policies, practices, and requirements to effectively innovate high schools.
- ▶ Capture and share school- and district-level challenges, successes, and effective practices to support long-term sustainability and grow the impact of high school innovation.

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL:

- ✔ **Eighty-five percent** of students **graduate on time**.
- ✔ **Twice** as many graduates **enroll in and successfully complete** an internship, apprenticeship, CTE pathway, or dual enrollment course, or earn an industry-recognized credential.

GLOSSARY

6th Grade Academies – a grade-level initiative that supports students' critical transition into middle school by focusing on attendance, belonging, and academic growth. As of School Year 2023-24, 11 middle schools host an academy program.

9th Grade Academies – a grade-level initiative that supports students' successful transition into high school through a network of social, emotional, and academic interventions. As of School Year 2023-2024, nine high schools host an academy program.

Connected Schools – schools that partner with the community to provide an integrated, whole-child approach to support not only a student's academic development, but a family's overall well-being through access to resources related to health, employment, housing, and more.

Cornerstone Experiences – high-quality, powerful lessons across grade levels that encourage maximum engagement with the district's curriculum. Students masterfully use academic content to solve real-world problems, prepare for future careers, design sophisticated creative works, and advocate for a better world. Examples include learning to ride a bike in second grade or using math to design logos in eighth grade.

Culturally Affirming Practices – research-based teaching practices that build awareness of and promote students' identities and embrace their cultural knowledge and ways of being.

CTE (Career & Technical Education) – the practice of teaching students technical, academic, and employability skills for success in the workplace and further education. DCPS offers over 30 industry-recognized certifications and 25 distinct pathways that help prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers.

DREAM (DCPS Road to Equity & Achievement in Mathematics) – a comprehensive plan to provide all DCPS students with a coherent, rigorous, and joyful math experience; equip educators with deep content knowledge; and engage families in math learning.

Dual Enrollment – a program that allows DCPS high school students to take challenging college courses at no cost and earn transferable college credits. Programming is available to students across all 21 high schools in the district with universities setting their own admissions criteria and selection process.

Educational Equity – creating an environment to eliminate opportunity gaps, interrupt institutional bias, and remove barriers to academic and social success, particularly for students of color. To promote equity, DCPS provides access, inclusion, and affirmation, offering the most support where the greatest disparities have historically persisted.

My Afterschool DC – the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education's initiative to expand high-quality afterschool programming in priority elementary and middle schools across the District with a focus on filling gaps for students with the greatest needs.

Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) – a data-driven organizational framework to ensure that all students' needs are met through increasingly targeted interventions across three levels of support.

STEM Education – the approach to learning and development that promotes the interconnectedness of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to help students develop logic, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills that can be used across all subjects.

To learn more visit dcpstrong.com/strategic-plan/