

2019



Get Ready...Leave Ready



Strategic Plan for Improving High Schools

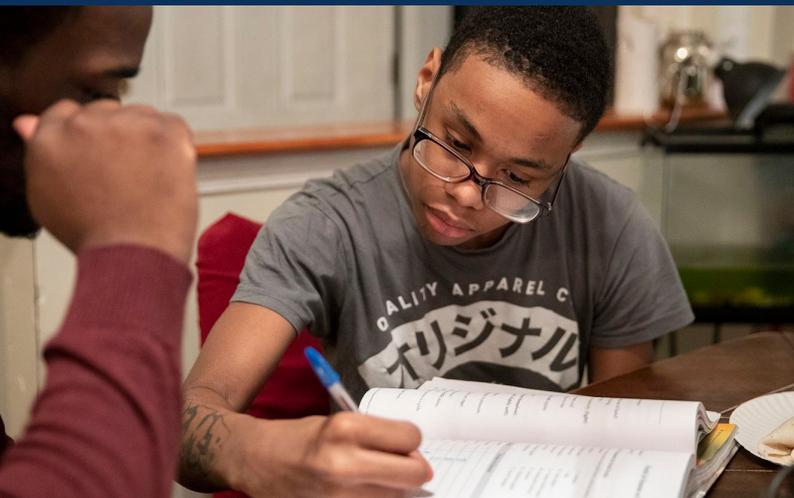


THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

PURPOSE

This document builds upon the District's Action Plan, which has resulted in steady increases in student academic achievement over the past seven years. The pages ahead summarize an extensive research process through which we identified the needs of the system, developed a vision for the high school experience, and selected key strategic areas of focus for the next five years. Our collaborative planning process was grounded in direct input and guidance from students, families, teachers, leaders, community members and partners. The brilliant suggestions and thoughtful reflections of our valued stakeholders serves as the foundation of our ambitious plan. The final pages of this document outline expectations for schools as we support all students graduating with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to succeed in college, work and life.

If you have any questions, please contact getreadyleaveready@philasd.org.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, the District's 54 high schools began to reshape the student experience in order to meet the changing needs of 21st Century learners. Offerings now include traditional college preparation, career and technical education, project-based experiences, internships, and middle college programs. Ninth grade academies have been implemented at 27 high schools in order to support the needs of students during the critical transition to high school – and they are showing great promise. The Opportunity Network serves over 3,000 students who had previously dropped out of school. Students have increased opportunities for dual enrollment and advanced placement. Classrooms have been redesigned into modern learning spaces, and substantially more services are in place to support students and families. Over the past few years, student academic achievement has increased and significantly more students are graduating from high school.

We have much more work to do. High schools are challenged like never before to prepare students for a vast array of postsecondary experiences. The modern economy requires new entrant workers to possess a complex set of cognitive, interpersonal and technical skills in order to thrive in the global economy. Our society has shifted dramatically in the past seventy-years and the primary skill set required to thrive is the ability to think creatively, solve complex problems and engage with a diverse set of individuals/communities across the globe. To that end, we have turned our attention to modernizing the secondary school experience.

Our goal is to create highly interactive schools that embrace the challenge of strengthening the cognitive abilities of our students by engaging them in modern-day content both in-and-out of the classroom. We recognize the need to support our school-based teams by delivering state of the art professional development opportunities. We are committed to providing the necessary services to support our schools, students, and families adequately. We believe that if we deliver instruction that reflects high expectations for learning, inspires students to reach high standards, and that sparks passionate and joyful interest in learning, we will prepare them for success beyond our doors.

FOUNDATIONAL WORK

What We Have Accomplished

High school transformation is a long-term process, particularly in a system the size of Philadelphia. Over the past five years, The School District of Philadelphia restored core services and programs after the devastating budget cuts of 2012. District teams have worked collaboratively to lay the foundation for expanding our work to deliver on our vision of students demonstrating the knowledge, skills and mindsets needed to succeed in college, work and life.

2013-2018:

- Implemented the use of data analytics to guide management decisions
- Implemented the 9th-grade academy model in 27 high-need schools
- Aligned Career and Technical Education programs to workforce demands
- Expanded dual-enrollment and advanced placement opportunities for eleventh and twelfth grade students
- Revised grading, graduation, and promotion policies to clarify academic expectations and increase consistency across high schools
- Created additional school options ranging from traditional college-prep, CTE, project-based, competency-based, middle college and career themed

2018-2019:

- Expanded the Office of High School Supports, led by a Deputy Chief of High School Strategy
- Developed high-school specific focused professional learning sessions aligned to students' attendance, credit attainment, and social-emotional health
- Designed and implemented a High School Institute focused on instructional strategies



HIGH-LEVEL HIGH SCHOOL DATA (2017-18)

54 High Schools

- 19 Special Admission
- 21 Neighborhood
- 13 Citywide Admission
- 1 Virtual

Demographics

52%	African American
20%	Hispanic
13%	White
11%	Asian
5%	Multi-racial/Other

2017-18 Keystone Assessment Data*

- *While scores are on the rise, less than one half of students scored proficient or advanced in English Language Arts*
- *Only 21.6% scored proficient or advanced in Math*
- *Only 28.7% scored proficient or advanced in Science*

34,752

Students in grades 9 - 12

69%

Graduation Rate including Alternative Schools

17%

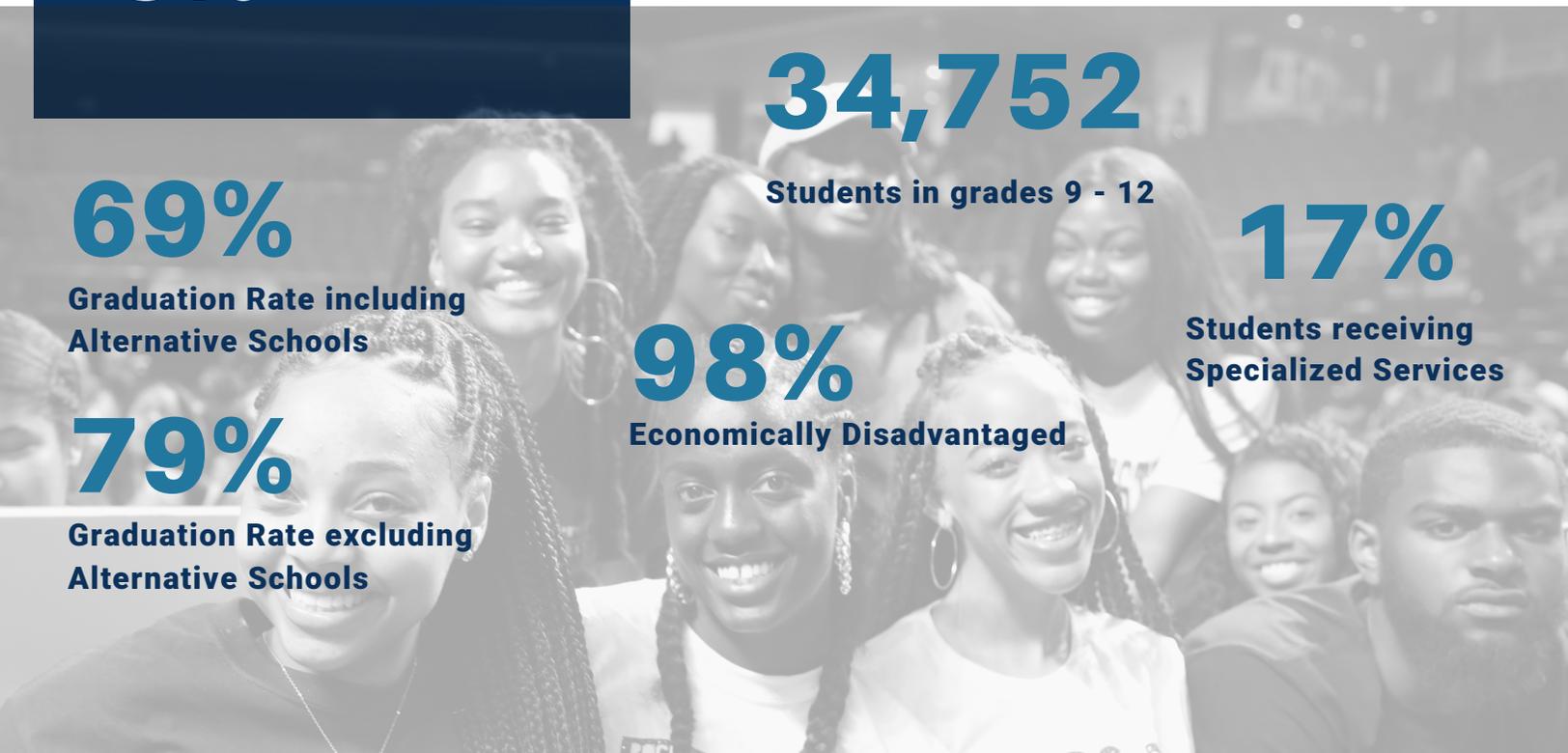
Students receiving Specialized Services

79%

Graduation Rate excluding Alternative Schools

98%

Economically Disadvantaged



HIGH-LEVEL DATA ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Alternative Education
Progress Report Tiers
(2017-18)

- 0 Excelling
- 3 Achieving
- 14 Approaching
- 4 Under performing

Demographics

71% African American

19% Hispanic

6% White

2% Asian

3% Multi-racial/Other

Number of Alternative Programs Serving High School Grades for 2018-2019 School Year

Type of Program	Count
Accelerated	15
Dual Enrollment	1
Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth	2
Educational Options Program/Adult Programs	4
Justice	2
Total	24

28%
Graduation Rate

3,557

Students enrolled grades 9-12*

57%
Economically Disadvantaged

11%
Students receiving
Specialized Services

**enrollment may undercount the number of students served in alternative programs as all programs experience high levels of student mobility/entry throughout the school year*

RESULTS FROM 2017-18 DISTRICT-WIDE STUDENT SURVEY

District students only (not Alternative), grades 9-12 all schools, 48% response rate

36%

of students strongly agree

*I know what I have to
do to get the career I
want*

38%

of students strongly agree

*I know what I plan to
do when I graduate
from high school*

31%

of students strongly agree

*My school is helping
to prepare me for
college*

67%

of students strongly agree

*My family has high
expectations for me
in school*

PROFILE OF A GRADUATE

We believe 100% of students will graduate college and career ready.



CRITICAL THINKER

- Analyze and evaluate information critically and competently
- Propose solutions based upon data
- Quickly and easily adapt knowledge and skills to new environments
- Demonstrate perseverance
- Effectively solve problems



CREATIVE & INNOVATIVE PRACTITIONER

- Take risks to accomplish a task
- Create original work that demonstrates high quality and reflective approaches
- Provide solutions to problems
- Reflect and rise above obstacles



COMMUNICATOR

- Communicate personal values
- Write with precision, clarity and coherence
- Listen effectively
- Deliver information effectively using a variety of modalities
- Public Speaking



SKILLFUL & KNOWLEDGEABLE PROFESSIONAL

- Demonstrate academic and professional excellence
- Reliable, punctual, and professional
- Financially literate with strong money management skills
- Collaborative
- Adaptable



CULTURALLY COMPETENT CITIZEN

- Contributing member of society
- Understand their own and others' cultural heritage
- Behave with integrity and take responsibility for their behavior, actions and choices
- Have compassion and empathy for others



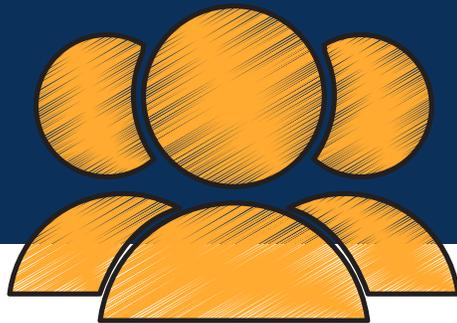
HEALTHY HUMAN

- Find joy and satisfaction in learning
- Positively motivated
- Driven and resilient
- Self-confident
- Self-sufficient
- Resourceful

OUR ASPIRATION FOR STUDENTS & SCHOOLS

Vision

High schools are learning organizations designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to succeed in college, work and life



Values

- Students are our priority
- An investment in teachers yields positive outcomes for students
- Stakeholders' engagement promotes collective work and responsibility

Goals for High Schools

- Engage students in rigorous, standards-aligned content accessed through authentic, responsive, and relevant learning experiences
- Engage students in social and emotional learning so that they can understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions
- Increase student engagement and participation in decision-making processes regarding learning experiences inside and outside of school
- Increase opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to succeed in college, work, and life

What Does it Mean to be College and Career Ready?

The School District of Philadelphia defines college and career readiness as students demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to succeed in college, work, and life, by ensuring every student:

- Achieves mastery in a core set of skills (Reading, English, Science, and Math) required for employability and succeed in credit-bearing general education coursework at a college, university, or training program (*College Ready*)
- Identifies a career interest, articulating the skills and processes required to enter the career, and advancing along a career pathway (*Career Ready*)

PRIORITY WORK

and Strategic Indicators

INSTRUCTIONAL RIGOR

- Provide students with grade-level content and supports to attain academic expectations and beyond
- Engage students in academic content while demonstrating the relevance of the content to career interests
- Integrate “real-world” applications within the curriculum and incorporate alternative instructional methods that are interactive

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

- Create, disseminate, and embody a schoolwide SEL vision
- Provide all staff with the training they need to implement the SEL vision
- Implement schoolwide SEL programming (Tier I) that facilitates relationships and community building
- Implement systems to identify students who need social, emotional, or mental health supports
- Provide system-level and school-level supports that are responsive to students’ identified needs
- Engage adults in assessing social-emotional and mental health

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Remove barriers to students’ engagement with the school community
- Offer opportunities for student voice to be included in the design of major initiatives at each school
- Develop a menu of extra-curricular activities that are aligned with the expressed interests of the student body
- Engage students in the design of academics, social and extracurricular activities

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

- Develop new and expand existing college & career awareness, exploration and immersion opportunities
- Increase participation and retention in CTE, AP, IB and dual enrollment programming
- Develop best practices for Academic Advising to ensure students are on-track and meeting learning goals
- Leverage the benefits of Naviance as a tool for college & career readiness

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- Graduation Rate
- Attendance Rate
- Quality Credit Attainment
- Postsecondary Persistence
- Districtwide Student Survey Results

SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOLS



In order to promote readiness for college and career, we are enhancing our students' classroom experiences, addressing the broad social & emotional needs of needs of students, providing opportunities to engage in activities outside the traditional classroom, and ramping up college and career activities.

INSTRUCTIONAL RIGOR

Students engage in rigorous, standards-aligned content, accessed through authentic, responsive, and relevant learning experiences. Instructional rigor increases the cognitive load of students, affording the use of higher-order & critical thinking skills to increase intellectual development, academic understanding, and independent application of learning.

- Project-based learning (6th-8th grades)
- Academic advising (6th - 12th grades)
- STEM Academy (6th - 12th grades)
- Literacy & mathematics diagnosis and responses to intervention (6th - 12th grades)
- Algebra 1 and Spanish 1 (8th grade)
- Literacy talks (9th grade)
- Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, "Senior Year Only" (11th - 12th grades)
- PSAT, SAT, Accuplacer, NMSQT
- "Just in Time" academic supports (9th - 12th grades)

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

Students engage in social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

- SEL vision setting and training with staff and students
- SEL competencies focus: self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management, and responsible decision making
- Supports for decreasing barriers to learning
- Spaces for meditation and self-regulation for adults and students

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Students engage in multi-dimensional experiences that involve them in all aspects of learning in and outside of schools.

- Agency and ownership in learning and community building
- Civic engagement
- Community service
- Student government & student clubs
- Intramural sports
- 9th Grade Academy
- Financial planning for the future

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

Students engage in college and career readiness, demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to succeed in college, work and life.

- Career awareness, career exposure and career immersion
- High school entry and exit plans
- Middle grades career academy exposure
- Career interest embedded in curricula
- Individual learning plans
- Career and Technical Education opportunities for middle grades, Re-engaged Youth, and 9th grade
- Career pathways
- Career oriented shadow days, internships, and apprenticeships
- High school shadow days, visitation days, school selection, summer bridge, high school orientation
- High school commitment day, decision day, college signing day
- JROTC

DESIRED OUTCOMES

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) completed a literature review in 2017 identifying those metrics that prior research had determined to be the strongest indicators of post-secondary success. Based upon the results of their review, and following discussion with our staff, students and stakeholders, we are able to put forth desired outcomes that are both strong indicators of post-secondary achievement and specific to the local context of The School District of Philadelphia and our student population.

- Over 60% of students maintain an attendance rate of 95% or higher
- Over 90% of students will have zero out-of-school suspensions
- Over 95% of 12th-grade students will be on track for graduation
- Every graduating student will have participated in at least one internship or job shadowing experience aligned to interest
- Every graduating student will have participated in at least one AP, IB, dual-enrollment or career and technical education (CTE) course

2022

APPENDIX 1

Supporting Documents

Instructional Rigor

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2. Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J. M., Moore, L. A., & Fox, J. H. (2010). Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic. Civic Enterprises.
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4. Conley, D. T. (2007). Redefining College Readiness. Educational Policy Improvement Center (NJ1).
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