



Mr. Michael J. Testani
Superintendent
Phone: 203-255-8371
FAX: 203-255-8273

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Education Members

From: Mr. Michael J. Testani, Superintendent
Executive Team Members

Date: May 26, 2023

Re: District Improvement Plan Update

The 2022-2027 District Improvement Plan was developed based on six strategic focus areas: Academics, SEL & Equity, Professional Development, Growth, Student Support, and Community. The following is a summary of work in each of those areas that currently is in progress and planned for the upcoming school year:

A. Academics

Strategic Initiative	2022-23 Activities & 2023-24 Plans
<i>Standards-based & Culturally Responsive Curriculum</i>	<u>English Language Arts:</u> Program and resource adoption will be discussed at the May 9 BOE meeting and with approval, programs can be purchased for the “kick-off” for the new PK-12 ELA standards-based, culturally responsive curriculum that is scheduled for Tuesday, May 30. Curriculum writing will continue in the summer and will be completed during the months of September and October. The completed PK-12 curriculum will be presented to the BOE in November 2023 for approval at a December 2023 BOE meeting. Once approved, professional learning can begin in January 2024 to prepare teachers and leaders for a fall 2024 implementation.

	<u>District Implementation:</u> A UbD framework has been developed for the district and enacted. All new curricula will follow the template with standardized expectations and information. The district has begun looking at a <i>Culturally Responsive Rubric</i> . We have gathered other rubrics from districts and will make a Fairfield rubric to guide our curriculum reviews.
<i>Gifted Program</i>	Site visits began to collect relevant information regarding gifted and talented programming. A number of options are available. The district will determine the direction of the available options to plan a TAG program.
<i>Implementation Guides</i>	A common implementation guide protocol was finalized and is being used in all curriculum and implementation updates. Departments have been inventoried for curriculum and implementation articulation. In general, core courses have completed implementation guides. Department leaders continue to work on course implementation revisions, common and performance tasks, and learning plans in alignment with the approved curriculum.

B. SEL & Equity

Strategic Initiative	2022-23 Activities & 2023-24 Plans
<i>Social/Emotional MTSS</i>	Currently Social Workers and School Psychologists are utilizing DESSA data to provide services to students who are identified as “Need of Instruction” in specific SEL competency areas. School psychologists and social workers are completing a draft MTSS SEL process at this time to implement during the 2023-2024 school year. The district level SEL team will continue to collaborate with the curriculum department to further develop the MTSS process that aligns SEL with academic expectations and interventions to holistically address students’ needs
Explicit SEL Instruction and Professional Learning	School psychologists and social workers are using several evidence-based methodologies to provide explicit instruction to students in SEL competencies, including the Mind Up and Second Step. For the upcoming school year, the district will be investing in a comprehensive Pre-K 12 evidence based SEL program “Move this World” (MTW). This evidence-based social emotional learning program is an effective way to promote students’ healthy social and emotional development, increase academic performance, and support young people’s success and well-being in school. Starting in the 2023-2024 school year, we will provide all FPS staff with professional learning in SEL through implementation of the MTW program with students. Staff will utilize the MTW program to regularly provide direct SEL instruction to students in general education settings.

<i>Targeted Supports for Underserved Students</i>	The “Move This World” program has parent resources and student materials available in Spanish with other languages coming soon. We will target increasing parent engagement via the “Move this World” parent component, so students and families have opportunities to develop and practice SEL skills in the home. We will also be focusing on ensuring that diverse students are represented in SEL materials and content and to help educators understand how culture plays a role in the development and expression of SEL competencies.
<i>Rigorous Course Enrollment</i>	The high school teams have engaged in a review of the course selection process in order to target students and families to expand their discussions on course possibilities. They have also conducted data reviews to identify strengths and areas of growth by department and have implemented protocols for School Counselors to use when engaging in course selection conversations with students who may not see themselves in a higher-level course.
<i>Attendance</i>	Many of the schools participated in the CSDE-sponsored workshops on a multi-tiered approach to improving attendance in schools through engagement, partnerships, and early intervention. This year we launched the District Attendance Team, which meets monthly to discuss trends, share best practices, and identify new strategies/resources. Additionally, they have been working on drafting a staff handbook on attendance protocols and processes and have revised the chronic absenteeism letter which will include softened language and student, grade level, school attendance data for the 2023-24SY.

C. Professional Development

Strategic Initiative	2022-23 Activities & 2023-24 Plans
<i>Professional Learning</i>	<u>Diversity, Equity & Inclusion</u> - Partners for Educational Leadership will be conducting focus groups at the five secondary schools to develop an understanding of the degree to which students, teachers, staff, and parents feel a sense of belonging in FPS. They plan to gather information about student experiences in relation to their feelings of acceptance and belonging within school and determine recommendations to ensure that every student has an inclusive and equitable learning experience. Additionally, Dr. Derrick Gay, a renowned diversity and inclusion strategist with over 24 years in the field, will provide professional learning to faculty, staff, parents, and board members so that we have a common language and understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) and develop strategies to foster a more inclusive environment for all learners, staff, and families.

	<u>Literacy How Structured Literacy</u>: PreK teachers and Speech & Language Pathologists participated in 3 ½ days of PD; Grade K teachers participated in 8/10 of the sessions/20 hours of the 25 hours scheduled in the series so far and Special Education teachers participated in 8/11 sessions to date. Grades 1, 2 and middle school LASs, reading teachers and SRBI coordinators will participate in the series beginning in October of 2023.
<i>Evaluation & Feedback Systems</i>	Our evaluation framework was designed and was under review. District administrators participated in two rounds of feedback and alignment testing during the 22-23 school year. During this time, the state legislature raised a bill on Teacher Performance Evaluations (HB 6757). This bill, if passed, will have implications for our evaluation system in its next iteration. We have paused our design team, planning, and implementation in order to allow the district to be in alignment with the state legislature if passed. The district's PDEC team has met three times. During the last meeting, the team reviewed the legislation and how the district should implement it, if passed, in the near future.
<i>Diverse & Qualified Candidate Hiring</i>	<u>Marketing & Branding Campaign</u> – Fall 2022, Human Resources committed to increase FPS's visibility using a multifaceted approach. Redesign of the HR page on the website and increase online presence by working with the Director of Communications. Targeted marketing utilizing digital and static billboards, radio and print ads.
	<u>Increasing Educator Diversity Coaching Series</u> - Twelve administrators and teachers participated in six CSDE/CES coaching sessions to begin the creation of developing a district plan to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of FPS staff. Through these sessions the Recruitment & Retention Committee was formed.
	<u>Recruitment & Retention Committee</u> - Currently twelve administrators and teachers comprise this committee, which is tasked with examining current recruitment and retention strategies and adding new strategies, as appropriate and aligned with district needs. The committee is in the process of establishing a district-wide applicant screening and interviewing process and has committed to ensuring FPS is visible to the community, through targeted marketing.
	<u>Career Pathways</u> - Fall 2022 new partnerships were formed that facilitate grow-your-own pipelines for non-certified staff. These partnerships with Fairfield University, Relay School of Graduate Education, and the CT Teacher Residency Program (in its 3rd year) will increase the certified candidate pool in our teacher shortage areas.

D. Growth

Strategic Initiative	2022-23 Activities & 2023-24 Plans
<i>School Improvement Plans</i>	School teams drafted SIP goals focused on improving student achievement, attendance, and access to honors/AP courses. Administrators engaged in a mid-year review of SIP goals and strategies, including a discussion of progress and necessary adjustments. Schools will wrap up the 2022-23 school year with an end-of-year SIP review, highlighting their accomplishments and successful strategies. They will also spend time during the summer drafting 2023-24 SIPs, which will be a continuation of the work and provide cohesion across school years.
<i>Strategic Alignment</i>	All SIPs were drafted so that they are aligned with the District Improvement Plan and aligned across the level (elementary, middle, and high schools). Additionally, there is alignment between the SIPs and administrator and teacher goals, so that there is shared ownership of the work. Professional learning at the building level for the 2022-23 school year was aligned to the school improvement goals.

E. Student Support

Strategic Initiative	2022-23 Activities & 2023-24 Plans
<i>Multi-Tiered Support System & Responsive/Research Based Instruction</i>	<u>Literacy</u> : Considerable attention was given to improve the quality and quantity of literacy research-based programs for our LAS interventionists to provide tier two and tier three intervention to students in our elementary and middle schools. At the elementary level, two new interventions were added: UFLI - to address student needs in K-2/3 who need intervention support with foundational skills, while REWARDS Intermediate and Secondary training most recently took place to support grades 3/4-8 students who require more support in word work, vocabulary/ comprehension and fluency. These research-based programs are appropriately added to Fairfield's "Intervention Toolkit" to support our multi-tiered support system with embedded progress monitoring to determine student response to instruction through an analysis of data points while examining student progress against the trajectory of benchmark performance. We have budgeted for the identification of additional research-based programs to support students in reading and writing for SY 23-24.
<i>Data-driven decision making</i>	Based on feedback from building administrators, we are working on the launch of Decision Ed in 2023-24 to increase immediate access for buildings to various data points in support of SIPs goals and improving student outcomes, specifically analysis of programming and progress monitoring intervention data.

<i>Comprehensive assessment</i>	An examination of the Acadience Learning for Reading, as well as the University of Oregon's DIBELS 8 have been trialed with some LAS Interventionists and Coaches at North Stratfield, Dwight, Mill Hill, and Holland Hill to help provide feedback on their ability to inform instruction and match instructional routines/materials/interventions to student need. Walter Wakeman has been working with the elementary MSTs to examine both screeners in math. Middle school LAS' are also examining Acadience Learning for Reading in the next few weeks. All district leaders will be introduced to NWEA in May to consider this tool for both Math and ELA. All feedback will be considered to identify a new universal screener in order to develop a streamlined assessment plan for the 2023-24SY.
---------------------------------	--

F. Community

Strategic Initiative	2022-23 Activities & 2023-24 Plans
<i>Communications Process Integration</i>	We are developing a strategic communications plan to provide a framework for providing information and successes to FPS families, staff and communities. The district newsletters for staff and families were relaunched this year as a mechanism for highlighting a variety of news (academic achievements, community events, BOE updates, health reminders, etc.). We also engaged in a trial implementation of the Parent Square communication platform at five schools during 2022-23SY (Warde, Tomlinson, McKinley, Mill Hill, and Holland Hill), with plans for district-wide launch at the start of 2023-24SY. This platform will increase two-way communication with parents and families and the school.
<i>Stakeholder Engagement</i>	We provide regular updates to the FPS social media accounts and website, including the creation of a Redistricting/Facilities Utilization page. We have started a review of the FPS website with a plan to launch a revised site at the start of the 2023-24 school year, which will provide easier access for parents, staff and members of the community. We have conducted a number of surveys to collect student and parent feedback on various aspects of education in FPS.