

Harrisburg City School District
Amended Recovery Plan
2023 – 2024 Report for Quarter 1
July 1 – September 30, 2023



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Authority & Purpose

The Harrisburg School District has been in receivership since June 17, 2019. After a three-year period, at the recommendation of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Court Appointed Receiver, another term of receivership was petitioned. On June 17, 2022, the Honorable William Tully granted the petition to extend receivership until June 17, 2025. Section 672-A (b) (2) of the Pennsylvania Public School Code requires the submission of a quarterly report to the Secretary of Education. This report reflects the period from July 1 through September 30, 2023, which is the first quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

District Demographics

The 2023-24 school year opened on August 28, 2023. Student enrollment was calculated daily for a period of 10 days to determine students who may be dropped from the rolls after not attending during the first 10 days of the school year. As of September 22, 2023, there are 5,932 students enrolled in brick-and-mortar schools and 457 students enrolled in Harrisburg Virtual Learning Academy (HVLA), the District's cyber program. The total enrollment is 6,389 students, which represents an increase of 300 students since this same timeframe in September 2022.

A comparison of September 2022-23 to September 2023-24 initial student enrollment by building shows increases in all buildings except for SciTech, Marshall and Math/Science which reflect minor decreases in enrollment:

Building	2022-23	2023-24
Ben Franklin	705	730
Camp Curtin	475	491
Cougar Academy	316	324
Downey	376	387
Foose	486	507
Harrisburg High: John Harris Campus	1370	1419
Harrisburg High: SciTech Campus	325	324
Marshall	76	75
Math/Science	387	384
Melrose	623	648
Rowland	590	615

Scott	458	485
District Total	6187	6389

Additionally, 164 students are enrolled in outplacements to begin the 2023-24 school year:

Placement	Regular Ed	Special Ed
Catapult Learning Capital Academy	2	34
Cougar Paws at Hamilton	25	1
Cougar Middle Years at Hamilton	14	1
Cougar Achieve at Hamilton	10	1
Cougar Excel at Hamilton	57	19
Merakey	0	2
New Story (Cumberland & Hbg)	0	10

Yellow Breeches	0	3
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Dauphin County Technical School (DCTS) has 257 students enrolled from Harrisburg High School as of September 2023. This represents an increase of nine (9) students over September 2022 enrollment but a decrease of 22 students from the end of the 2022-23 school year. Only 38% of students who applied to DCTS from Harrisburg High School were accepted into the program.

Charter/cyber charter school enrollment is 1,166 students as of the start of the school year¹, with most students (538) attending Commonwealth Charter Academy.

Academic Performance

Preliminary 2022-23 Future Ready PA Index data reflects very low achievement levels across the District with pockets of solid growth in many areas (green and blue PVAAS data), except for Ben Franklin Elementary School and John Harris campus of Harrisburg High School where both achievement and growth remain extremely concerning. The lack of academic progress in these two schools is reflective of the major turmoil in both educational facilities during the 2022-23 school year. As a result, Superintendent Turman made significant changes to building level leadership over the summer months.

¹ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:a0a4e6f2-4bc8-30a7-9cc5-20cf0a012397>

Effective July 1, 2023, new principals and assistant principals were named for those schools. In the first two months of the 2023-24 school year, there is a tremendous improvement in the climate of these buildings. Student discipline has been significantly reduced and order has been restored.

School	ELA/ LIT Pro+Adv	Math/ ALG1 Pro+Adv	Science/ BIO Pro+Adv	ELA/ LIT PVAAS	Math/ ALG1 PVAAS	Science/ BIO PVAAS	ELA/ LIT Adv	Math/ ALG1 Adv	Science/ BIO Adv
Benjamin Franklin	11.6	5.0	18.8	52.0	50.0	50.0	0.3	0.3	2.6
Camp Curtin	9.9	0.5	13.6	100.0	86.0	88.0	1.1	0.0	0.8
Downey	3.8	3.8	20.4	76.0	78.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
Foose	9.1	3.9	23.5	79.0	100.0	73.0	0.0	1.3	1.2
Marshall	15.1	4.1	4.5	100.0	75.0	79.0	0.0	1.4	0.0
Math Science	49.2	11.7	58.6	100.0	78.8	89.0	6.9	2.5	19.5
Melrose	14.0	7.2	35.6	59.0	73.0	59.0	1.2	1.6	8.7
Rowland	9.9	1.3	14.6	90.0	77.0	91.0	0.6	0.0	1.2
Scott	9.1	4.3	19.0	74.0	74.0	50.0	0.0	0.5	2.4
Cougar Academy	14.7	4.4	27.4	76.3	93.3	73.3	0.9	1.3	2.4
John Harris	13.0	4.1	3.1	50.0	50.0	59.0	1.2	0.7	1.2
SciTech	66.2	36.2	54.9	93.0	100.0	81.0	8.5	2.1	16.9

Baseline Acadience Reading and Math assessments for the 2023-24 school year were administered in the early weeks of September 2023 in Grades K - 2. Beginning of year (BOY) data shows 64.98% of elementary students testing well below benchmark in Reading and 50.0% of elementary students testing well below benchmark in Mathematics.

Benchmark Period beginning **Reading Percents for BOY 23-24**

Count of Student Number	Column Labels				Grand Total
	above benchmark	at benchmark	below benchmark	well below benchmark	
Row Labels					
Ben Franklin	7.82%	7.82%	10.42%	73.94%	100.00%
K	10.23%	5.68%	18.18%	65.91%	100.00%
1	5.71%	4.76%	9.52%	80.00%	100.00%
2	7.89%	12.28%	5.26%	74.56%	100.00%
Cougar Academy	14.00%	18.00%	20.00%	48.00%	100.00%
K	11.76%	17.65%	29.41%	41.18%	100.00%
1	5.88%	0.00%	17.65%	76.47%	100.00%
2	25.00%	37.50%	12.50%	25.00%	100.00%
Downey	5.26%	7.02%	11.70%	76.02%	100.00%
K	5.77%	3.85%	26.92%	63.46%	100.00%
1	7.69%	9.62%	7.69%	75.00%	100.00%
2	2.99%	7.46%	2.99%	86.57%	100.00%
Foose School	11.06%	8.65%	16.35%	63.94%	100.00%
K	12.50%	5.36%	25.00%	57.14%	100.00%
1	12.16%	8.11%	16.22%	63.51%	100.00%
2	8.97%	11.54%	10.26%	69.23%	100.00%
Melrose	20.41%	16.33%	9.52%	53.74%	100.00%
K	8.00%	12.00%	13.00%	67.00%	100.00%
1	32.97%	18.68%	8.79%	39.56%	100.00%
2	21.36%	18.45%	6.80%	53.40%	100.00%
Scott	10.21%	12.34%	13.62%	63.83%	100.00%
K	4.11%	4.11%	21.92%	69.86%	100.00%
1	17.11%	13.16%	13.16%	56.58%	100.00%
2	9.30%	18.60%	6.98%	65.12%	100.00%
Grand Total	11.62%	11.07%	12.33%	64.98%	100.00%

Benchmark Period beginning **Math Percents for BOY 23-24**

Count of Student Number	Column Labels				Grand Total
	above benchmark	at benchmark	below benchmark	well below benchmark	
Row Labels					
Ben Franklin	12.50%	9.09%	29.55%	48.86%	100.00%
Cougar Academy	0.00%	35.29%	35.29%	29.41%	100.00%
Downey	21.15%	11.54%	15.38%	51.92%	100.00%
Foose School	4.92%	9.84%	37.70%	47.54%	100.00%
Melrose	18.63%	5.88%	21.57%	53.92%	100.00%
Scott	6.41%	16.67%	23.08%	53.85%	100.00%
Grand Total	12.31%	11.31%	25.88%	50.50%	100.00%

Spring 2023 Keystone Exam results were received over the summer months.² Of the 509 students taking the exams at Harrisburg High School, only 4.9% scored Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I Keystone Exam. 10.2% of the 285 tested students scored Proficient or Advanced on the Biology Keystone Exam, and 14.1% of the 291 tested students scored Proficient or Advanced on the Literature Keystone Exam. There is much work that needs to be done to improve the academic performance of students at all levels, but especially as they prepare to exit high school.

² <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:4596c278-a87f-3602-a3c8-db6fe44ff1a9>

The following is a summary of actions taken and/or progress made from July through September 2023 relative to the Academic Performance initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan:

AP01 – Take action to improve Districtwide student attendance

The first day of school was August 28, 2023. Student attendance is recorded daily by building secretaries. Over the past two years there has been attention given to attendance procedures with a Student Withdrawal Process Manual³ developed to guide secretaries through the appropriate accounting since Average Daily Attendance (ADA) data must be accurate. Students who did not attend as of the tenth day of school on September 11, 2023, were dropped from the rolls.

Attendance data for the first month of school (August 28 – September 30, 2023) reflects a slight decrease from the same period in 2022 but a minor increase overall from the District average of 84.41% when the school year ended in June 2023. Most buildings still fall short of the desired 90% attendance rate. Cougar Academy, Marshall Math/Science Academy and SciTech exceed the 90% threshold. Those three schools are application schools in which students must apply for acceptance.

Building principals continue to monitor daily attendance, and school counselors are charged with conducting Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) meetings with parents of students who are habitually truant.

³ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:a654c0ec-dca3-328c-a541-a224fd7f2b15>

Schools/District Attendance for Opening Month of 2023-24 school year by building

Benjamin Franklin	86.15
Downey	88.79
Foose	89.88
Marshall	87.95
Melrose	88.56
Scott	88.46
Camp Curtin	83.04
Cougar Academy	93.29
Rowland	78.55
Math/Science	94.44
John Harris	73.62
SciTech	<u>94.3</u>
District	<u>84.64</u>

AP02 – Increase staff attendance by enforcing existing policies and improving reporting

A staff attendance report for the period of August 28 – September 29, 2023⁴ shows that Fridays continue to be the day of the week with the largest number of staff absences with personal and/or sick leave used most frequently by employees. Principals are monitoring staff attendance and have been directed by the Superintendent to meet with employees who may be excessively absent from work.

⁴ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:f70419e7-a088-32cc-a176-59922795cab8>

AP03 – Improve accountability for student performance

Effective October 2023, each building principal will be responsible for making a public presentation during scheduled Committee of the Whole and School Board/Receiver General Business meetings throughout the 2023-24 school year. The purpose of these presentations is to increase accountability of the building leaders for student performance by having them “own their data.”

AP04 – Use academic data to inform instructional practices

Ms. Julie Lehmer, Academic Data Coordinator, provides data to all District central office leaders and building principals. Ms. Lehmer has created an internal data dashboard⁵ that includes beginning, middle and end of the year data by school. This is an excellent tool for principals to use with teachers as they inform instructional practices.

AP05 – Continue Professional Learning Communities for principals and assistant principals

The focus for this school year’s Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is Pathways to Literacy Leadership⁶ from the AIM Institute® for Learning and Research. The PLC for principals and assistant principals is structured virtually in both

⁵ [Dash \(hbgd.us\)](https://hbgd.us)

⁶ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:123d3bcd-740c-3533-b4a1-8059ff606001>

asynchronous and synchronous formats with a pacing guide provided for leaders to follow as they progress through the learning.

AP06 – Continue coaching programs in the District

The District continues to employ instructional coaches at each school to support classroom teachers in improving instructional practices. Instructional coaches report to building principals. A system to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional coaches is needed to ensure that the benefit is worth the cost. Additionally, with several classroom teacher vacancies within the District, prioritization should be filling classroom vacancies before coaching vacancies are filled.

AP07 – Conduct annual performance evaluations of all staff

Annual performance evaluations for teachers, building principals and central office administrators were conducted this quarter for the 2022-23 school year. A goal for the 2023-24 school year is the development of an evaluation instrument for assessing performance of non-certificated staff such as paraprofessionals, secretaries, safety monitors, and other support staff positions.

AP08 – Ensure high quality staff in key leadership positions

During this quarter the District hired two new principals: Mr. Laquan Magruder for Harrisburg High School – John Harris Campus, and Mr. Jason Rawls for Scott Elementary School. The District also hired Ms. Jennifer Brosky as the new Supervisor of K-12 Mathematics and Science. The Office of Academics is now fully staffed with highly qualified leadership.

AP09 – Implement a standards-aligned curriculum across the District

The University of Pennsylvania visited the District in September to assess areas where their department of educational leadership could assist the District. Audit of the District's K-12 curriculum is an area that was determined as a need. Penn has proposed the following for the District's consideration:

1. **Assess Curriculum Alignment:** Evaluate the extent to which the current curriculum aligns with the district's stated goals, vision, and learning standards. Identify any gaps or areas that require improvement.
2. **Analyze Implementation Strategies:** Examine how the curriculum is being implemented across various schools and grade levels. Identify successful practices and areas for enhancement.
3. **Evaluate Assessment and Data Utilization:** Review the assessment methods and data collection techniques employed to gauge student progress and inform instructional strategies.
4. **Engage Stakeholders:** Conduct interviews and focus groups with administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members to understand their perspectives, expectations, and suggestions for improvement.
5. **Identify Professional Development Needs:** Analyze the professional development initiatives provided to educators to ensure they are equipped to effectively deliver the curriculum.

AP10 – Follow MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) process with fidelity in all buildings

The MTSS Playbook⁷ developed over the past school year with the support of Effective School Solutions has been finalized and presented to District leadership for implementation during the 2023-24 school year. Through the award of federal grant funds from the Department of Justice, the District can hire two MTSS Coordinators for the 2023-24 school year to oversee implementation.

AP11 – Develop a continuum of learning options for District students

Harrisburg Virtual Learning Academy (HVLA) and Cougar Academy continue to serve as learning options for students who are interested in cyber or blended learning opportunities. In addition to these models, the District has engaged in various partnerships this quarter to provide additional learning opportunities for students. Ten students from Harrisburg High School – John Harris Campus – are participating in the Hamilton Health Medical Assistant Training Program during the 2023-24 school year. 75 students are enrolled in dual enrollment courses through HACC, Harrisburg University, Central Penn College, and Temple University.

⁷ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:8e5331b1-244d-3e7a-9e87-d1f5d523e846>

AP12 – Attract and retain students at HVLA and Cougar Academy

The enrollment in Harrisburg Virtual Learning Academy (HVLA) has decreased dramatically since June 2023. There are currently 457 students enrolled in HVLA as of the end of September 2023 compared to 689 as of the end of last school year. This may be due, in part, to the return of several students to the brick-and-mortar because of new leadership in the schools. Historically, enrollment in the virtual learning program has increased as the school year progresses.

Cougar Academy, the District's blended learning K-12 school, gained eight (8) additional students compared with this same period last year and has a total enrollment of 324 students.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marisol Craig is charged with analyzing this data and developing a marketing plan to encourage students from exiting brick-and-mortar schools to outside cyber/charter schools.

AP13 – Review Special Education program costs and placements

The District continues to see the impact of COVID not only in learning loss, but also in the marked degree of mental health needs and lack of appropriate social skills amongst students. The now finalized MTSS process is being implemented with fidelity across the District.

Costs for Special Education student placements include:

- Yellow Breeches – 4 students. (\$31,936 - \$36,379 per student plus \$729 per student for transportation)
- Capital Academy – 37 students. (Base cost of \$32,220 for an emotional support placement and a base cost of \$62,820 for an autism placement)
- Merakey – 1 student. (Base cost per student of \$40,298.40)
- New Story numbers are the same. (Base cost of \$55,620 - \$75,060)

The District has experienced 229 new special education enrollments since the start of the school year. The Capital Academy number has gone up because the District has had to place a couple of extremely aggressive students who are diagnosed with autism in the autism program there. (The District continues to be short autism support teachers.) While the SESI programs at Hamilton have the lowest per student cost (\$13,522), it is the professional opinion of the Director of Special Education, Ms. Krystal Palmer, that students are not progressing there. In what she has witnessed to date, when students return to their typical building their behaviors are worse and have resulted in at least two of the added out-of-District placements that had to be made. There are two brand new teachers in the District's elementary emotional support classrooms. The District currently has three active enrollments for students who are coming into the District from full-time emotional support placements.

To help save on the costs of out-of-District placements, the District has designated a Special Education Supervisor who supervises all out-of-District placements and in-District emotional support programs. In certain situations, the District has

been trialing a 1:1 paraprofessional with a few students to see if that will help to make the behaviors manageable and avoid having to move the students out-of-District. All placement options on the continuum are considered before moving to an out-of-District placement. It is an absolute last resort.

Administration and Governance

The following is a summary of actions taken and/or progress made from July through September 2023 relative to the Administration and Governance initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan:

ADMIN01 – Annual training for all School Board members

A School Board mini retreat was held on September 19, 2023. Public Financial Management (PFM) provided a presentation⁸ to the School Board on budget projections, tax increases, and recovery plan exit criteria. Seven of nine Board members participated in this three-hour session.

⁸ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:89512517-7eb1-360e-98ab-c23e094061e7>

ADMIN02 – Update Board policies

Board Policy #251 (Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care and Other Educational Instability) was revised at the recommendation of PSBA during this quarter. Additionally, all Board policies that are required for annual notification were posted to the District website⁹

ADMIN03 – Improve public access to District documents

The District continues to utilize BoardDocs™ to publicly post both Committee of the Whole and School Board/Receiver General Business meeting agendas and minutes. The Receiver also maintains the section on the District website devoted to the Recovery Plan¹⁰ which contains Act 141 meeting agendas, minutes, and quarterly reports for easy access to the public.

ADMIN04 – Adopt an ethics policy for all District staff

Board Policy #827 (Conflict of Interest) was adopted in November 2021 to fulfill this requirement of the Recovery Plan.

⁹ <https://www.hbgd.us/Page/1207>

¹⁰ <https://www.hbgd.us/domain/90>

ADMIN05 – Reorganize central office staff

The District's organizational chart¹¹ was revised over the summer to include the newly created administrative positions.

ADMIN06 – Develop monthly and quarterly reports to be shared with the District administration, School Board and Receiver

Superintendent Turman's office produces a weekly update report to the School Board and Receiver which is a collaborative effort among the District cabinet members. The Receiver submits monthly reports¹² to the Pennsylvania Department of Education detailing what is occurring in the areas of academics, finance, operations, human resources, and recovery plan progress. Quarterly reports of progress on the recovery plan initiatives are developed by the Receiver for submission to the Secretary of Education, Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas Judge, School Board, and Act 141 Advisory Committee.

¹¹ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:acc818c4-9321-3ed2-a2c8-992548e1b17b>

¹² <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:6d363733-9918-3c25-bf44-c8369140fe1c>
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:78232a32-a231-3676-973b-e32a802b0e1e>
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:8e6a1a7b-489d-3fe1-9165-9db5af58b5b4>

ADMIN07 – Establish a monthly meeting to discuss Recovery Plan progress

The Act 141 Advisory Committee commenced its monthly meetings for the 2023-24 school year on September 12, 2023 (minutes are attached on page 35). Additionally, the District administration meets on the fourth Monday of each month to review progress on initiatives with Public Financial Management (PFM) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The September 25, 2023 meeting focused on a presentation¹³ by Dr. Marcia Stokes, Chief Financial Officer, regarding progress made on the financial initiatives of the recovery plan.

ADMIN08 – Develop an electronic Recovery Plan Status Dashboard

The electronic dashboard was created in the fall of 2021 to track progress on Recovery Plan initiatives for the public to view, but it is a task that is very time-consuming and often redundant due to the numerous other reports that the Receiver provides on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Operations

The following is a summary of actions taken and/or progress made from July through September 2023 relative to the Operations initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan:

¹³ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:e90e3942-2251-315a-b2fe-9a2109b9c29e>

OP01 – Develop a contract administration database and implement performance standards into all contracts

The District is utilizing OnBase, a content services platform, to organize and store all District contracts. The senior administrative assistant receives signed contracts from the Board Secretary to input into OnBase. Additional fields can be added to the platform to allow for the export of data as needed for various reports.

Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Marcia Stokes, is attending a webinar with the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) on contract performance evaluation.

OP02 – Review significant District contracts every three years

The District recently reviewed its three largest contracts – transportation, food service, and custodial/maintenance services. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for custodial/maintenance services with the contract being awarded to Metz Environmental Services, and for food service with the renewal of Southwest Food Excellence (SFE). The District's prior specialized transportation provider, Boyo Transportation, went out of business earlier this year, which prompted the renegotiation of the Krapf contract to incorporate the services previously provided by Boyo.

OP03 – Conduct Districtwide risk assessment

The District conducted a risk and vulnerability assessment through Vulnerability Solutions Group, LLC, in 2022. A host of recommendations were derived from this assessment. The District has begun the process of upgrading security

measures in each school to address those needs. Some examples include new metal detectors at Harrisburg High School – John Harris Campus, new window film and fencing around the Foose Elementary School playground and upgraded cameras in several buildings.

OP04 – Develop and implement a multiyear transportation improvement plan

Chief Operations Administrator John Reedy has been consulting with Bob Schoch through Public Financial Management to address areas of improvement for transportation services. Over the summer months transportation routes were analyzed and adapted to produce cost savings for the District.

OP05 – Develop a Districtwide communication plan

Trapani Communications has worked with Public Relations Coordinator Kirsten Keys to develop a draft communications plan¹⁴ to address how communication will occur throughout the District. Although it is a good starting point, the plan needs to be more fully developed with action steps and areas assigned to staff.

OP06 – Finalize and maintain position control system

Position control is now being tracked via eFinance.¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:ffd84267-dd79-30ec-b448-a3cb082a4a9e>

¹⁵ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:49e9da85-f12b-3c62-b610-06be68149ae5>

OP07 – Ensure high quality staff in the Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources has struggled for the past few months to keep up with the needs of employees due to being short of three positions (receptionist, administrative assistant, and HR specialist).

OP08 – Document all Office of Human Resources procedures and review all Districtwide policies

Director of Human Resources Heidi Zula is working with 425 Consulting in the development of HR procedures recommended from the recently conducted operational audit of the Office of Human Resources by Pennsylvania Association of School Personnel Administrators (PASPA).

OP09 – Improve monitoring and reporting of Human Resources information in documents shared with the Receiver

The Office of Human Resources provides the Receiver with names of employees taking Family Medical Leave as well as resignations, retirements, new hires, and changes in employment status. This information is made available through the BoardDocs™ system.

OP10 – Conduct exit interviews

Exit interviews are conducted by Vina Milligan, Assistant Director of Human Resources. Information is to be shared with the Superintendent of Schools.

OP11 – Develop a Districtwide recruitment strategy

The Superintendent recently met with Color & Culture; a local organization committed to assisting the District with recruitment of minority candidates for teaching positions in the Harrisburg School District. The District entered into a contract with Color & Culture to advertise and recruit educational professionals in the southern region of the country as well as in Puerto Rico.

OP12 – Rewrite position descriptions for all District staff

Job descriptions are reviewed and updated as positions are posted. During this quarter, the following job descriptions were created or revised:

- HVLA Office Assistant changed to HVLA Secretary
- Transportation Office Assistant changed to Transportation Secretary
- Autism Coach

OP13 – Clarify roles and responsibilities between District and contracted food service staff

Ongoing training occurs within the department. The District has a positive working relationship with the Food Service Coordinator and the contractor.

OP14 – Improve District oversight of Food Service management company

Weekly meetings between the Coordinator of Food Service and Southwest Food Excellence continue to occur.

OP15 – Monitor Point of Sale system to ensure correct counts for reimbursement

Food service counts are monitored daily within the established point of sale system.

Financial Management

The following is a summary of actions taken and/or progress made from July through September 2023 relative to the Financial Management initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan:

FM01 – Utilize a multi-year financial projection to guide budget decisions

Dr. Marcia Stokes, Chief Financial Officer, utilizes Forecast 5 software to pull financial projections. Public Financial Management (PFM) recently completed the five-year financial projections which were enhanced by the real-time data that Dr. Stokes was able to obtain through Forecast 5.

FM02 – Adhere to existing fund balance policy

The District adopted Board Policy #620 (Fund Balance) in 2021. Fund balance has grown from \$14.5 million in 2019 to \$20.5 million in 2022.

FM03 – Develop a five-year facility utilization plan

Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Associates, the District's Architect of Record, recently completed a District-wide Facility Study.¹⁶ The study showed that there are nearly \$130 million in capital needs that exist in District schools. The administration will now take this information to develop a five-year facility utilization plan.

FM04 – Develop a multi-year capital planning and budgeting process

The Superintendent and his cabinet members are currently discussing possible redistricting now that the Steele Elementary School renovation project will be completed in August 2024. There is discussion about redrawing attendance boundary lines to enable more neighborhood elementary centers. A full plan will be unveiled after the Superintendent holds community and parent meetings to solicit feedback on a proposed plan.

¹⁶ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:f3a2544b-7ecc-3df2-ade8-c1955d1d8fa7>

FM05 – Develop a comprehensive action plan for addressing and correcting audit findings from annual independent audits

The District celebrated a clean audit with no findings or material weaknesses for the first time in 20 years. The 2022-23 audit is currently in progress with results available next quarter.

FM06 – Contract with an independent financial advisory firm

The District is currently unable to issue new debt or re-fund existing debt due to high interest rates. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for a financial advisor was developed last year and is being held until such a time that the District can borrow money. Meanwhile, the District continues to consult regularly with Raymond James for financial advising as they were the firm that handled the 2021 re-funding.

FM07 – Review existing debt management policy

The District's debt management policy¹⁷ (Board Policy #630) was adopted by the Receiver at the February 28, 2023, School Board/Receiver General Business meeting.

¹⁷ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:9a5e3bae-8c9d-3d54-bdbf-6c91c4031b2a>

FM08 – Ensure highly qualified staff in the Office of Business Services

This quarter the District hired Heidi Eshenour, Benefits Accountant, and Lisa Wise-Williams, Payroll Specialist, in the Business Office. Both individuals come to the District with experience.

FM09 – Document all Office of Business Services processes and implement a policy around document retention

The District has been working with 425 Consulting to develop and document processes. A new business office procedural manual was developed in September 2023 and has been made available to all District employees.¹⁸ The District is currently working on administrative regulations to support Board Policy #800 (Records Management).

FM10 – Improve monitoring and reporting of financial information in documents shared with the Receiver

Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Marcia Stokes, regularly updates the Receiver on the financial status of the District via the monthly Treasurer's Report which is presented for approval at the School Board/Receiver General Business meetings, as well as through a shared folder of Forecast 5 reports.

¹⁸ https://hbgsdk12paus-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/personal/lsuski_hbgsd_us/Documents/Q1%20Report%202023-24/Business%20Procedures%20Manual%20%2009.2023%20.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=vFnaHJ

Revenue

The following is a summary of actions taken and/or progress made from July through September 2023 relative to the Revenue initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan:

R01 – Increase real estate taxes annually to the Act 1 index as deemed necessary by the Receiver

The Board opted to forego a tax increase in June 2023 since the Governor’s budget included Level Up funding. However, due to the legislative delay, the District still has not received its Level Up funding this quarter.

R02 – Improve the current year real estate tax collection rate

The City of Harrisburg serves as tax collector for the District at 1/3 of the cost. There has been discussion of going to Keystone Collections to improve the collection rate, but there is a desire to maintain goodwill with the City, so this has not been reviewed in earnest at this time.

R03 – Develop partnerships with tax-exempt entities to generate voluntary payments

The Receiver has opened conversations this quarter with the Commonwealth Charter School to discuss possible partnerships.

R04 – Receive Special Education funding contingency annually

The window to apply for annual contingency funding opens in late November 2023. The District intends to apply for four (4) students whose expenses exceed the \$75,000 threshold.

R05 – Increase reimbursement for Social Security contributions paid on behalf of employees

The District receives 75 cents back on every dollar paid into social security on behalf of employees.

R06 – Increase Medicaid ACCESS Revenue

The District has entered into an agreement with Samantha Blood, CRNP, to perform Medical Authorization for School-based ACCESS Program services for the Harrisburg School District, at a cost of \$13.00 per IEP reviewed by the provider. The District budgeted to receive \$500,000 in Medicaid ACCESS revenue during the 2023-24 school year.

R07 – Continue to support grant-writing professional

The District has contracted with John Hanson of Hanson Community Partners to perform grant-writing duties for Harrisburg School District. The District did not receive the Renew America grant for which application was made; however, there are other applications pending for which awards are forthcoming.

R08 – Sell vacant District buildings

The District sold the Woodward property to Fernandez Realty. The petition for the sale was filed in Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas.¹⁹ A court hearing was held on July 7, 2023, to comply with the PA School Code for the sale of public buildings.²⁰ Settlement is scheduled for October 2023.

R09 – Allocate windfall revenues and budgetary resources among priorities outlined in the Recovery Plan

Windfall revenue (such as ESSER funds) has been spent on priority items such as LED lighting, metal detectors, landscaping, window tinting, carpeting, signage, exterior doors, renovation of the garden level of HVLA, and the John Harris gymnasium floor.

Workforce

The following is a summary of actions taken and/or progress made from July through September 2023 relative to the Workforce initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan:

¹⁹ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:06d01fbd-66bb-3ba4-86be-45ee906341e6>

²⁰ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:4f78060d-7ed0-33e5-bcc2-84e23e32d898>

WF01 – Offer affordable salary increases to staff

Effective July 1, 2023, the newly approved Harrisburg Education Association (HEA) Collective Bargaining Agreement²¹ went into effect. Professional employee salaries increased by an average of 4% for the 2023-24 school year. A new Act 93 Agreement²² also took effect on July 1, 2023 with salary increases of 3%. July 1, 2023 was the beginning of year two of the AFSCME contract²³ with support staff employees receiving a salary increase of 2.5% and a non-reoccurring ESSER bonus.

WF02 – Reduce future growth in healthcare costs

The District continues to be concerned about rising healthcare costs and the possibility that its self-insurance plan has been historically underfunded. Several meetings were held this quarter between the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Human Resources, and Gallagher Benefits executives to determine the status of stop loss reimbursements checks that

²¹ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:47d17535-6cfa-3e78-9097-25f83711dfcf>

²² <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:77322499-2526-3258-8a64-8552a22a7db9>

²³ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:d3e1e454-e88b-3925-8120-6746992db4d0>

have yet to be received for the previous fiscal year. A decision was made to contract with Conrad Siegel to perform an actuarial analysis on the District's healthcare expenditures to determine the root cause of the underfunding.

WF03 – Review and control workers' compensation costs

There is an outstanding workers' compensation claim that is currently in the process of reaching settlement. The Receiver has met with the Director of Human Resources, workers' compensation attorneys and insurance brokers to agree upon settlement authority.

The Office of Human Resources has done a fine job assigning light duty work to employees to return them to work as soon as practicable following a work-related injury.

WF04 – Monitor and reduce overtime costs

Supervisors and directors are responsible for monitoring overtime for their employees. Permission must be granted by a supervisor/director before employees are permitted to remain at work beyond their contractual day. An analysis of actual overtime costs for the first quarter of the 2023-24 school year will be reported in the next quarterly report.

WF05 – Contribute to healthcare reserves.

The Chief Financial Officer has prioritized contributions to the District’s Internal Service Fund 60 (healthcare reserves) with the recommendation of having at least six months’ worth of claims reserved to always cover existing claims. The fund has increased from zero dollars in 2019 to \$4.5 million in 2022.

WF06 – Evaluate all staff positions

All staff positions are evaluated through attrition and when requests for additional positions are received from the administration. With the exhaustion of ESSER funds, it will be critical for the Superintendent to continuously evaluate the necessity of each position in the District to ensure return on investment as ESSER-funded positions will either be eliminated or transferred to the General Fund.

WF07 – Explore managed competition for cafeteria and custodial functions

This initiative has been accomplished by the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) that were issued last spring with contracted awards going to Southwest Food Excellence and Metz Environmental Services respectively.

Act 141 Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2023
5:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Dr. Sieta Achampong, Beth Light, Eric Turman, Tim Wendling, Dr. Tamara Willis, Eugene Spells, Melanie Cook, Dr. Marisol Craig, Doug Thompson Leader, Michele Rolko, Dr. Travis Waters, Dr. Lori Suski

District Administrators: Portia Slaughter, Adam Nornhold

Interested Citizens: Christine Anderson (via Zoom), Laura Harding

- Dr. Waters welcomed the group back from the summer break.
- Dr. Suski updated the committee on the proposed plan amendment that was submitted to the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas in July. The Rule to Show Cause was posted in August, but there has been no further information received from the Court.
- Mr. Turman reviewed the annual snapshot for 2023 which contains four (4) goals for the comprehensive plan:
 - Building a Strong Foundation
 - Many Cultures, One Community
 - Academic Focus on Equity and Excellence for All
 - High School Graduation Through Successful Transitions
- The committee members offered the following comments/suggestions in response to the document shared by Superintendent Turman:

- Data sources need to be cited on the document.
 - Graduation cohort – numbers are not always a clear picture of true graduation rate – makes numbers look artificially low.
 - Need explanation on data.
 - How is Cohort 4 and 5 calculated?
 - Do people understand pathways?
 - Was root cause analysis done?
 - A system should be put in place for guidance.
 - Do students have ownership of their E-School account to check their status?
 - Students should be trained to check their academic progress.
- Ms. Rolko expressed concern that students are sometimes not provided with courses they need. She shared an example of how some students who already had her P.E. class are put on her roster again or show up in her class. Ms. Cook asked why a student would be going to a class who is not rostered. Ms. Rolko said that students want to be in class with their friends. Mr. Spells indicated that he is working with counselors on credits and holding them accountable to track students' credits toward graduation. Dr. Achampong stated her concern that SciTech is “lumped in.” There should be some mechanism in E-School to avoid kids being scheduled again into the same class. Students trust the adults that are doing the scheduling. Dr. Waters asked how the District is tracking that students have met graduation requirements. Mr. Turman said that every counselor and principal are required to review and sign off to ensure that all requirements are met for graduation for each senior. Mr. Turman said that that students should move through high school as a cohort for the purpose of tracking progress and having one counselor for seniors is unrealistic.
 - Mr. Turman indicated that an action step for Goal 1 is to plan to move to a 7-period schedule and move away from the block schedule at the high school level. Plans are in process to meet with teachers, develop a mock schedule and review staffing implications.
 - Mr. Turman also shared the plan to bring back career pathways (formerly known as ROAR) and to make it phenomenal by partnering with HACC, Temple, HU, and Central Penn College to provide opportunities for juniors and seniors to be dually enrolled. Mr. Turman said that the core focus will still be on Math, Science, English and Social Studies and the infusion of pathways.

- Mr. Turman thanked the committee for their feedback on the four (4) goals of the comprehensive plan and asked that questions or further recommendations be sent to him. Mr. Turman shared that he will be presenting the draft of the comprehensive plan at the September 26th School Board/Receiver General Business meeting.
- Dr. Suski acknowledged Laura Harding's attendance at the meeting as an interested citizen. Dr. Suski also shared that she will be reviewing committee membership as some individuals do not attend meetings at all. Dr. Suski thanked all those present for their service.
- The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.
- The next meeting will be held on October 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.