



Harrisburg City School District
Amended Recovery Plan
Report for Quarter 1
July 1 – September 30, 2022



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1. Authority & Purpose

In accordance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Financial Recovery Act 141 of 2012, the Harrisburg City School District executed the third iteration of its financial recovery plan in August 2021 under the leadership of former Receiver Dr. Janet C. Samuels, who retired from the role on January 28, 2022, and Dr. Lori A. Suski, who succeeded her as Receiver on January 29, 2022.

On June 17, 2022, the Honorable William T. Tully issued an order pursuant to Section 671-A of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, placing the Harrisburg City School District under Receivership for a new three (3) year period. Dr. Suski was reappointed Receiver effective June 17, 2022 – June 17, 2025.

On August 29, 2022, Acting Secretary of Education, Eric Hagarty, appointed Dr. Travis Waters as the new Chief Recovery Officer for Harrisburg City School District on a part-time basis to assist with the monitoring of the Amended Recovery Plan and to serve as an advisor to the Receiver.

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, 2022 through September 30, 2022, which is the first quarter of the 2022-23 fiscal year. The report includes an update on progress made toward achievement of the goals and initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan and highlights areas of continuous improvement.

2. District Demographics

As of September 30, 2022, the Harrisburg City School District has 6,434 students enrolled K-12 for the 2022-23 school year, which is a decrease of 81 students from the enrollment as of the

last day of school on June 8, 2022. Demographic data for 2022-23 reflects a student population of over 90% students of color and 87% of the total student population is economically disadvantaged. 16% percent of K-12 students receive special education, and 23% of K-12 students qualify for English Language Development (ELD) services.

3. Academic Achievement

In meetings last spring, the Act 141 Advisory Committee discussed the need for a longitudinal view of the District’s academic status over the past 10 years. PFM compiled the following chart to depict the Adequate Yearly Progress and/or school improvement designations from 2013 through 2021:

	2013 Recovery Plan		Current PDE School Improvement Status
	2012 AYP	AYP Status	CSI/A-TSI/TSI
Harrisburg School District	N	Corrective Action 2 - 10th Year	
John Harris HS	N	Corrective Action 2 - 9th Year	CSI
Sci-Tech MS	N	Warning	
Camp Curtin MS	N	Corrective Action 2 - 7th Year	TSI
Rowland MS	N	Corrective Action 2 - 3rd Year	CSI
Math-Science Academy	Y	Made AYP	
Ben Franklin ES	N	Corrective Action 2 - 2nd Year	TSI
Cougar Academy	--	NA	TSI
Downey ES	N	School Improvement 2	CSI
Foose ES	N	Corrective Action 2 - 8th Year	A-TSI: Economically-Disadvantaged, Black
Marshall ES	N	Corrective Action 2 - 3rd Year	--
Melrose ES	N	Warning	TSI
Scott ES	N	School Improvement 2	A-TSI: Economically-Disadvantaged, Black

Individual school improvement plans were submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the three CSI and four TSI schools listed above with approvals granted in July 2022. A change in School Improvement Facilitator (SIF) was recommended for the 2022-23 school year by the State Project Director for K-12 Continuous LEA/School Improvement. Education Elements (a Scholarus Learning Company) has been contracted via the CSI grant funding to serve as SIF for John Harris High School, Rowland Academy, and Downey

Elementary School, and to provide principal coaching supports at John Harris High School as the administrators lead their school improvement team in implementing the approved plans.

A major restructuring change that occurred this quarter resulted from Superintendent Turman recommending the relocation of Grade 5 from the middle schools to the elementary buildings for the start of the 2022-23 school year. This plan, developed last spring, allowed for a K-5 elementary school configuration and a 6-8 middle school design. The school year opened with this new structure in place. Overall, the change appears to have been a positive one for the middle schools. Conversely, the elementary schools have struggled with the change as they are finding it challenging to retain 5th grade teachers.

One of the primary goals of the Amended Recovery Plan is to increase the percentage of students achieving proficient and advanced on statewide standardized tests and decrease the percentage of students scoring at basic and below basic levels. As was stated in last quarter's report, the preliminary 2022 PSSA/Keystone Exams resulted in most students scoring basic or below basic. These results were disappointing but expected given the 17 months of online learning experienced by students at Harrisburg School District during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over the past few months, there has been discussion in the Act 141 Advisory Committee meetings regarding the trajectory of academic progress since the first recovery plan was developed in 2013. Below is a comparative summary of the historical academic achievement developed by PFM. A breakdown of longitudinal PSSA and Keystone data by school has also been compiled by PFM.¹ An analysis of the data indicates that

¹ [HBGSD Historical Academic Performance v2.xlsx](#)

academic achievement has declined over the past 10 years. The issue existed far before the pandemic. Systemic change is necessary District-wide to positively impact academic success in the areas of Math and Reading. STAR Reading and Math assessments were administered in September 2022 in Grades 1 – 8 for Math and in Grades 3 – 8 for Reading. Only 21% of students across the District scored at or above benchmark in Math with 13% on watch. 22% of students are in need of intervention and 44% are in need of urgent intervention. In Reading only 12% of students across the District scored at or above benchmark and 11% are on watch. 15% of students are in need of intervention and 62% of students are in need of urgent intervention.

As noted in last quarter's report, Superintendent Turman worked with Performance Fact, LLC, to develop an instructional framework containing four pillars and three lenses of practice. The document was synthesized to align with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's 18 Essential Practices document. Although the document was completed, there is no evidence that expectations for implementation of this framework in all District schools have been provided by the leadership team. Walk-throughs and formal observations of teachers should include a mechanism for looking for evidence that these practices are consistently in place across all classrooms.

The District is beginning the Comprehensive Planning process in 2022-23 and will be working again with Mass Insight™ to conduct a follow-up District Diagnostic which will assist the Administration with the development of the Comprehensive Plan and provide the Receiver with perceptual data to assess progress made since the first round of receivership from June 2019 – June 2022.

	2013 Recovery Plan - Baseline				2021 Recovery Plan Reporting 2018-19		2020-21 Results		2021 Recovery Plan Goals		2021 Recovery Plan Goals	
	2011-12 PSSAs	2012-13 Keystones	2014-15 PSSAs	2014-15 Keystones (JHHS/ Sci-Tech)	2018-19 PSSAs	2018-19 Keystones (Cougar/JHHS/ Sci-Tech)	2020-21 PSSAs	2020-21 Keystones (Cougar/JHHS/ Sci-Tech)	2022-23 PSSAs	2022-23 Keystones (Cougar/JHHS/ Sci-Tech)	2025-26 PSSAs	2025-26 Keystones (Cougar/JHHS/ Sci-Tech)
<u>Proficient/Advanced</u>												
Algebra I		28.9		18.1/71.4		5.0/5.7/72.7				43.7/42.5/85.1		71.5/71.5/91.1
Biology		11.2		23.2/42.1		0.0/12.3/68.2				34.2/34.5/78.7		63.3/63.3/84.7
Literature		43.6		10.9/73.7		15.8/13.5/79.1				31.6/37.8/74.2		63.2/63.2/80.2
<u>Reading/Language - All</u>												
Advanced	9.0				Proficient & Advanced: 20.2				Proficient & Advanced: 40.6		Proficient & Advanced: 60.9	
Proficient	25.9											
Basic	22.8											
Below Basic	42.3											
<u>Reading - Economically Disadvantaged</u>												
Advanced	7.8											
Proficient	25.5											
Basic	23.1											
Below Basic	43.6											
<u>Math - All</u>												
Advanced	12.0				Proficient & Advanced: 9.0				Proficient & Advanced: 25.7		Proficient & Advanced: 36.8	
Proficient	25.3											
Basic	24.2											
Below Basic	38.4											
<u>Math - Economically Disadvantaged</u>												
Advanced	11.1											
Proficient	24.6											
Basic	24.9											
Below Basic	39.4											
<u>Science - All</u>												
Advanced					Proficient & Advanced: 32.3				Proficient & Advanced: 50.2		Proficient & Advanced: 68.0	
Proficient												
Basic												
Below Basic												
	Source: 2013 Recovery Plan		Source: 2016 Recovery Plan		Source: 2021 Recovery Plan				Source: 2021 Recovery Plan		Source: 2021 Recovery Plan	

Over the last several months, the Receiver has participated in several meetings with a collective impact model group in the Harrisburg community called “Communities Practicing Resilience.” This group provides a platform to discuss issues of community concern. A subcommittee called “Ready to Enroll” was formed to investigate strategies for better preparing students to enter kindergarten ready for school at age 5. As a result of this subcommittee’s work, the District will be looking to expand its partnership with United Way of the Capital Region to increase enrollment in the “Ready for School; Ready to Succeed” programs offered to pre-school students and their parents through the Harrisburg School District.

One of the key academic achievement goals of the Amended Recovery Plan is to increase the District-wide graduation rate as measured by the four-year graduation cohort.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Cougar Academy						73.68%	83.33%	84.62%	86.96%	78.57%
JHHS	45.11%	42.69%	52.78%	53.85%	55.84%	49.87%	55.94%	59.40%	61.05%	67.45%
Sci Tech	93.59%	17.53%	97.70%	100.00%	100.00%	98.78%	97.37%	100.00%	95.71%	100.00%
District wide	51.16%	38.60%	62.30%	65.32%	68.88%	58.84%	65.07%	68.56%	68.59%	73.90%
Statewide	83.50%	83.41%	85.45%	84.75%	86.09%	86.57%	85.85%	86.52%	87.36%	86.69%
Source: https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/CohortGradRate/Pages/default.aspx 4 Year Cohort Graduation Rate by School, PIMS										

The table above reflects a longitudinal perspective on the District’s graduation rate. The District has increased the percentage of students graduating from both the John Harris and SciTech campuses over the past three years; however, John Harris continues to fall well below the state average for graduation rate by nearly 20%. Part of the John Harris campus CSI plan involves action steps to increase graduation rate.

Another critical academic achievement goal is to Improve overall student attendance. The chart below reflects student attendance by school from the first day of school on August 29, 2022 through the last day of this fiscal quarter on September 30, 2022. The Amended Recovery Plan sets a goal of at least 90% attendance rate for students. Six (6) schools are currently not meeting that target from the outset: Ben Franklin Elementary School, Foose Elementary School, Marshall Elementary School, Scott Elementary School, Camp Curtin Academy, and John Harris High School.

Building	Attendance Rate
Ben Franklin	86.86%
Downey	90.24%
Foose	89.61%
Marshall	87.81%
Melrose	92.01%
Scott	89.35%
Camp Curtin	86.19%
Cougar Academy	93.59%
Rowland	96.00%
MSA	94.67%
JHHS	78.89%
SciTech	91.68%

Although the District advertised for two Home and School Visitor positions this quarter, no applications were received. Therefore, following up on habitually truant students will continue to be the responsibility of District social workers and school counselors. At the request of Superintendent Turman, a new position, Director of Student Enrollment and Placement, was created this quarter. Student enrollment and attendance data accuracy is paramount to ensure that the Harrisburg School District is receiving full subsidy for the students on its rolls. Mr. Rick Lejkowski has assumed those duties. Mr. Lejkowski has served as the PIMS Administrator for the District in prior years.

In addition to student attendance, staff attendance continues to be a critical barrier to academic success. The shortage of human capital continues to plague the District. The 2022-23 school year began with the same compacted schedule at Rowland Academy, as established in Quarter 4 of the 2021-22 school year, due to numerous teaching vacancies in Grade 8 and no specialist teachers. Ben Franklin, Melrose, and John Harris also have several vacancies that remain unfilled.

Planning for the Staff Absenteeism Task Force initiative, required by the Amended Recovery Plan, was started by Mr. Chris Celmer (MCIU Director of the Harrisburg Partnership) and will be taken over by the District's new Chief Recovery Officer, Dr. Travis Waters, in collaboration with Director of Human Resources, Ms. Heidi Zula. The District continues to experience high levels of absenteeism, even early in the school year. The inability to secure substitute teachers results in classes being divided among remaining staff which inhibits effective teaching and learning when class sizes exceed 30 - 35 students at some grade levels and buildings.

The District continues to focus on the use of data to inform instruction. Baseline data was collected during the first week of the school year in Grades K- 8 in both Reading and Mathematics. This data is analyzed by building data teams consisting of principals, teachers, Math interventionists, Reading specialists and instructional coaches. The District continues to utilize the Data Wise protocol which was presented in training over the last two school years.

Superintendent Eric Turman made a change to the structure and format of monthly leadership team meetings for 2022-23. Principals, assistant principals, and central office administrators now meet after school hours from 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month for their leadership meeting time. This change was a direct result of feedback from teachers regarding accessibility of building and District leaders during school hours. Professional Learning Community (PLC) time is included as part of the meeting. An agenda of topics for the fall PLCs² includes themes such as how to provide meaningful instructional feedback to teachers and analyzing and utilizing data for decision-making.

² <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uo3PIbwFCm-PzQZWhTr0OHxWt07dnfe7/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100213857609039639184&rtpof=true&sd=true>

The District currently has an instructional coach assigned to each school in the District. The coach supports Reading and Math instructional delivery for teachers and principals to improve their knowledge and delivery of best practices. Instructional coaches meet two times per month in a job-alike group for a three-hour professional learning and work session.

Annual performance evaluations for teachers and principals for 2021-22 were delayed until the release of both the official 2022 PSSA and Keystone Exam data (October 2022) and PVAAS data (anticipated in early November 2022).

With the MCIU contract ending on June 30, 2023, the District desired to ensure high quality staff in key leadership positions moving into the 2023-24 school year in the area of academics. Ms. Portia Slaughter was hired this quarter in the role of Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and replaces MCIU contracted CAO Dr. Susan Sneath. The 2022-23 school year provides a time of transition from Dr. Sneath to Ms. Slaughter. Superintendent Turman is contemplating how he wishes to structure the remaining two MCIU-contracted Director of Academics positions currently held by Ms. Jackie Castleman and Mr. Ed Gooch. Both positions also expire on June 30, 2023. Mr. Turman and Ms. Slaughter will be bringing forth their recommendations for the Receiver in the coming months as to how those positions would be structured for 2023-24 and beyond. The Chief Recovery Officer has highly recommended the creation of a Director of Early Childhood position as one of those two replacement positions so that a dedicated position is in place to build relationships with parents and pre-school providers to better prepare students to enter kindergarten.

The following curricular areas have been updated over the past few months and are available on the District website:

- Health & Physical Education - K-8 and High School Physical Education, Strength & Conditioning, and Advanced Lifetime Fitness
- Media Literacy - K-8
- Art - K-8 and High School Ceramics I and II
- Music - K-8
- High School Math (Algebra I/Honors Algebra I; Algebra II/Honors Algebra II; Geometry/Honors Geometry)

The implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework is a focus for the 2022-23 school year. Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Marisol Craig, has been leading this work and in collaboration with Effective School Solutions (ESS) finalized the development of a MTSS “playbook” for social and emotional learning tiers of support. The District expanded its contract with Effective School Solutions and now has a clinical therapist assigned to each District building to work with a caseload of 10 students at the Tier 3 level of intensive need. The District continues to contract with Pennsylvania Counseling Services to provide Tier 2 levels of support for identified students for individual and/or group or family therapy. The District has also contracted with Living Well Institute (LWI) to provide Tier 1 levels of mental health support for students, families and employees of the Harrisburg School District. LWI is working with a variety of community partners to bring ancillary programming into the school setting in an after-school model which will provide meaningful, social-emotional learning opportunities for students and

engage community partners with the District. These additional supports are critical to the academic success of students because it is impossible to focus on teaching and learning when the culture and climate of the classroom or school is chaotic, in distress or unhealthy.

The Harrisburg Virtual Learning Academy (HVLA) which was introduced in the 2020-21 school year as an alternative, virtual learning option for parents who did not wish to have their children participate in the traditional brick-and-mortar learning program, grew exponentially from the 2020-21 to the 2021-22 school year to 896 students, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and continued fears of sending students back to school last year. However, as of September 30, 2022, there are only 408 students enrolled in HVLA. While this is close to half of the students enrolled as of June 2022, the District does anticipate extended growth of this program, due in part to the leadership of Ms. Sheri Killian, the new Director of Virtual Learning who was hired last spring. Ms. Killian is ramping up the level of expectation for this program and also providing opportunities for HVLA students to come into the brick-and-mortar Lincoln School a few times per year for project-based, in-person learning days. These opportunities are offered by outside competitor Commonwealth Charter Academy and were well-received by both parents and students of HVLA.

Additionally, the Harrisburg City School District continues to operate Cougar Academy, a blended learning option for students in Grades K-12. This school operates out of the Lincoln School location on State Street and has enrollment of 409 students. These blended and virtual options have assisted the District in preventing the loss of significant numbers of students to outside charter and cyber charter schools, saving the District millions of additional dollars of taxpayer funds.

Enrollment for cyber/charter schools in 2022-23 has decreased from 1,361 students as of June 30, 2022 to 1,211 students as of September 30, 2022. 737 of the 1,211 students are in cyber schools while 474 are enrolled in brick-and-mortar charter schools. The marketing campaign conducted in spring of 2022 was successful in attracting students to either HVLA or Cougar Academy from outside charter or cyber schools.

The 2022-23 school year began with a total of 1,030 students identified as special education (in need of an Individualized Education Plan or IEP). The new Director of Special Education, Ms. Krystal Palmer, began work in Harrisburg School District in mid-July 2022. She expressed concern about the large numbers of students placed outside the District for special education services and the cost of nearly \$17 million to educate those students in outplacements for the 2021-22 school year. Ms. Palmer will be reviewing these costs in detail over the next quarter to see how best to meet students' needs in the least restrictive environment in a potentially more affordable manner.

4. Administration and Governance

Superintendent Turman finalized his organizational chart over the summer months; however, a lack of clarity still exists within the administration regarding chain-of-command. Some of the confusion is due to having some key positions currently in a transition mode. For example, principals are beginning to receive direction from the new Chief Academic Officer as Dr. Sneath begins to transition out of the role. As reported last quarter, there was a lack of clarity surrounding the role of the Assistant Superintendent. Superintendent Turman addressed that concern this quarter. When the Director of Safety & Security resigned in August 2022, Dr. Craig

assumed that responsibility and spent a great amount of time managing the safety monitor staff until a replacement was named. Dr. Craig has also assumed oversight of the Director of Pupil Services, Director of Student Enrollment, and the Director of Federal Programs. While duties have become more clearly delineated, the Chief Recovery Officer and Receiver agree that the Assistant Superintendent should play a vital role in academics due to her extensive background and experience as an educator and plan to recommend some additional changes to Mr. Turman's organizational chart for consideration to best utilize the skill sets of the entire cabinet.

The elected School Board members continue to meet monthly. This quarter the Superintendent and Receiver opted to modify the existing meeting schedule. Effective August 2022, a Committee of the Whole structure has been established. The full School Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month to hear information presented by the Administration in the areas of academics, personnel, athletics/activities, finance, and operations. The Receiver has welcomed the engagement of the School Board members in asking questions of the Administration prior to the Receiver moving each item to the agenda for the General Business Meeting which is held on the fourth Tuesday of each month. This approach has allowed the elected officials to feel valued although they have no voting authority (except to levy taxes) under receivership. This structure has also provided an opportunity for the Receiver to model for the School Board how a business meeting should be conducted professionally. An Executive Session is scheduled prior to either or both the Committee of the Whole and/or General Business Meetings to discuss areas that are allowable outside of the Sunshine Act, such as personnel, student, or legal matters. All elected Board members are current with their required annual trainings available through the PSBA all-access membership. The Receiver will be developing a

long-term training plan for the School Board in 2023 – 2025 to ensure that the elected officials are poised to potentially take back local control in June 2025 should receivership end.

Effective July 1, 2022, Ms. Jatoya Drayton assumed new duties as School Board Secretary. Ms. Drayton is responsible for the development of the meeting agendas and minutes for both the Committee of the Whole and General Business Meetings of the School Board. The District continues to utilize BoardDocs™ to upload meeting agendas, minutes, and documents for approval so that they are readily accessible to the public for transparency. All Board policies are also accessible via the BoardDocs™ online portal.

The District contracts with Pennsylvania School Boards Association's (PSBA) Policy Review Services and Policy News Network to receive recommendations for policy updates. As policies are revised and brought to the Receiver for formal approval, they are updated in BoardDocs™ and available for the public to view on the District's website. Superintendent Turman has been working with the Assistant Superintendent Dr. Craig and Board Secretary Ms. Drayton to develop a process for reviewing recommended policy changes in a systematic manner to ensure that important legal updates to policies pursuant to the Pennsylvania Public School Code are brought forward for review and approval by the Receiver in a timely manner.

In the fall of 2021, the Superintendent was tasked with developing a template for monthly reports to the School Board on the goals/initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan; however, the reports have not been produced to date. In the professional opinion of the Receiver, this is an additional task that should be delegated by the Superintendent to the Assistant Superintendent. With the hiring of a Chief Recovery Officer in August, the Receiver has requested that Dr. Waters

work with Mr. Turman to develop a plan to produce this document for presentation at the monthly School Board/Receiver General Business meeting to be compliant with initiative ADMIN06 of the Amended Recovery Plan.

The Act 141 Advisory Committee continues to meet monthly on the second Thursday from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Meetings returned to in-person in spring of 2022 after nearly two years of virtual meetings. The committee supplies feedback on data presented by the administrative team relative to recovery plan goals. A meeting is also held on the fourth Monday of each month with the leadership team and representatives from PFM and PDE to review data and supply updates on various initiatives of the plan.

At the request of the School Board, PFM has developed an exit framework to guide the work of the District over the next three years with the goal of receivership ending in June 2025. During the August and September 2022 meetings, both the Advisory Committee and District Act 141 leadership team discussed prioritization of initiatives in the Amended Recovery Plan relative to Academic Achievement. During the next quarter, the groups will focus on the pillars of Financial Management and Student Stability. PFM will synthesize the discussions from both groups into a framework which will help guide the remaining years of this term in receivership.

5. Operations

Mr. Chris Celmer, Director of the Harrisburg Partnership for MCIU, is scheduled to retire on December 31, 2022. Mr. Celmer remained in the District over the 2021-22 school year to assist with the transition of Mr. Turman to the superintendency for the first six months of the 2021-22 school year. In January 2022, Mr. Celmer took on several Recovery Plan-related projects for the

Receiver to ensure that operational items were being handled while the new Business Administrator, Dr. Marcia Stokes, focused on handling critical financial processes for the District. Three new positions were created and filled this quarter to benefit the operations of the Harrisburg School District. Mr. John Reedy was hired as Chief Operations Administrator and Ms. Nicole Fry as Director of Finance, on August 23, 2022. These new positions both report to the Business Administrator and will be instrumental in moving the District forward both operationally and financially as processes and systems are developed.

Mr. Wendell Morris was hired on September 27, 2022, as the new Director of School Police/Safe Schools. Superintendent Turman had requested the creation of this position following the resignation of the former Safety & Security Coordinator, Mr. Quinton Cobb. Mr. Morris is retired from the PA State Police and brings a wealth of experience to the role. The District has not yet decided on whether to bring back the former School Resource Officer (SRO) positions through Harrisburg City Bureau of Police or to investigate hiring its own police force, similar to what some other neighboring school districts have done. Whatever is eventually decided, Mr. Morris will play a critical role in helping the District to enforce safety and security protocols and to recommend upgrades as a result of the risk and vulnerability assessments completed in the spring of 2022 by Vulnerability Solutions Group, LLC.

Mr. Reedy has done an extensive review of the existing food service and transportation contracts as the Amended Recovery Plan stipulates. Mr. Reedy has also begun a review of the Aramark custodial agreement. Both the food service and custodial agreements are in their final year, so Mr. Reedy will be making recommendations for a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be issued this fall.

PFM Consultant Bob Schoch finalized the transportation improvement plan this quarter. The District extended its current contract with Boyo for the transportation of Special Education students through 2022-23 due to the volatility of the market and fair rates offered by this provider. During the next quarter, a recommendation will be made by Mr. Reedy regarding the possible need for a Request for Proposal (RFP) for general education transportation for 2023-24.

Meetings were held this quarter with crisis communications consultant Beth Trapani Communications to continue the development of a Districtwide communication plan. This extensive project was delayed over the past few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The finalization of this plan is one of the Superintendent's Objective Performance Standards for 2022-23.

The District was fortunate to attract a highly qualified Director of Human Resources with over 10 years of experience in benefits administration, background clearances, reference checks, labor relations, and the hiring/onboarding process. Since her arrival in the District, Ms. Zula has spent this quarter getting fully immersed in the District's current process and procedures. Ms. Zula has identified several areas of weakness in the Office of Human Resources that require adjustment. She has also observed that existing staff within the Office of Human Resources lack the understanding of important procedures. For this reason, the Receiver has authorized the Superintendent to contract with an outside entity to evaluate the operations of the Office of Human Resources and recommend the necessary changes to improve the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the work performed there. The Office of Human Resources is a critical element to the effective operations of any school district. In a recent exit interview, a former employee cited the lack of responsiveness by some Human Resources staff as one of the

reasons for her departure from Harrisburg. Continuous errors in payroll, tuition reimbursement, and benefits administration have impacted employees for years. It is imperative that this department be reorganized for better efficiency and personnel held accountable to perform their duties correctly. The assessment by an outside evaluator will provide an objective review of the issues and present an opportunity to make major changes to benefit the District.

Ms. Zula regularly updates the position control system as resignations are received and new hires are added. Ms. Zula collaborates regularly with Dr. Marcia Stokes to ensure alignment between the position control and payroll systems. The school year began with over 50 vacancies across the District. Despite advertising on various platforms, the District continues to experience a crisis of human capital needs. Although this is a regional and national issue, urban school districts suffer greatly in this area. More assistance is needed at the state and federal level to develop long-term plans for sustaining public schools in their current structure with fewer teachers and support staff available, as it is becoming nearly impossible to operate schools effectively with such shortages. The District has not formalized a recruitment strategy but continues to post all vacancies on the District website, advertise on Indeed.com, PSBA Career Gateway, and in other professional publications. Ms. Vina Milligan, Assistant Director of Human Resources, attended job fairs at local colleges and universities to attract more viable candidates of color to Harrisburg School District.

Job descriptions continue to be updated as positions become available and are then formally approved by the Receiver at public Board meetings before positions are posted. The following job descriptions were approved this quarter: Virtual Instruction Support Teacher, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Secretary for Facilities and Information Technology,

Senior Administrative Assistant for Finance and Operations, and Coordinator of College and Career.

The job descriptions for the District Food Service Supervisor and Staff were updated prior to the approval of the Amended Recovery Plan. Several training materials for Food Service staff were also developed. The following trainings have been put into effect:

- District Food Service Director - All trainings required by PDE including Administrative training, Annual training, FFVP training all located in the school nutrition toolbox (12 hours yearly).
- Southwest Food Excellence (SFE) Directors - Annual training, FFVP training all located in the school nutrition toolbox (12 hours yearly).
- All staff - Annual Food Service training: Civil Rights including nondiscrimination training, Offer vs Serve, ServSafe, Meal Counting & Claiming, Production Records, Standardized Recipe and Recipe Utilization, Customer Service, Team Building and FFVP training.

The District supervisor meets biweekly with management of Southwest Food Excellence (SFE) and visits sites weekly to monitor cafeterias. In addition, kitchen reviews have been conducted by Chief Operations Administrator, Mr. Reedy. Several areas have been identified for improvement:

- Kitchen equipment – identifying what needs repair as well as replacing outdated equipment.

- District employees' cooperation with the outside food service company and its employees.
- The cleanliness of floors and all other areas of the kitchen.
- The Food Service budget and strength of the Food Service Fund.

The District implemented PrimeroEdge as its Point of Sale (POS) system at the beginning of the school year. Since the District operates under a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), all students are deemed eligible for free breakfast and lunch. The District counts student meals as students enter the cafeteria line by tracking the number of meals served on an iPad. The counting of the student meals is being audited by the Chief Operations Administrator, with a full audit of the entry and tracking of PEARS to take place in November of 2022.

Lastly, the replacement of the synthetic turf and track surface at Severance Field was completed in August 2022. This is the first major upgrade to the field in more than 20 years and was sorely needed to ensure the safety of student athletes. The track was no longer usable for home track meets due to the safety concerns. Lighting was also installed as part of this capital improvement project which would allow for night competitions in the future. Soccer and marching band have benefited greatly from having later access to the field after football practice concluded daily the past few months.

6. Financial Management

The District finally received the 2020-21 audited financial statements from the local auditor this quarter.³ A few findings were noted, which were consistent with findings from prior audits as well as the Wessel report. Dr. Stokes will now develop a comprehensive plan for the Business Office to address and correct audit findings moving forward.

PFM has recently developed updated five-year projections for the District now that the audited financial statements for 2020-21 were received. PFM also added ESSER funds to the projections since they had not been previously included.

Dr. Stokes recommended and the Receiver approved the following transfers from the General Fund after the receipt of the 2020-21 audited financial statements:

From: General Fund (Fund 10)-Fund Balance Assigned to Workers Compensation
To: Health Insurance Fund (Fund 60)
Amount: \$250,000
Justification: To meet the District's required Workers Compensation Reserve to remain Self-Insured

From: General Fund (Fund 10)-Unassigned Fund Balance
To: Health Insurance Fund (Fund 60)
Amount: \$2,000,000
Justification: To build up the Health Insurance Reserve to be at least equal to 3 months of average claims expense

From: General Fund (Fund 10)-Unassigned Fund Balance
To: Capital Reserve Fund (Fund 22)
Amount: \$5,000,000
Justification: To reduce unassigned fund balance to maintain compliance with 24 PS 6-688 and begin building up funds for capital improvements

³ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:250e42a6-750e-38af-9485-820fb781d45b>

From: General Fund (Fund 10)-Fund Balance Assigned to Capital Improvements

To: Capital Reserve Fund (Fund 22)

Amount: \$7,000,000

Justification: Transfer the funds assigned in the General Fund to Capital Improvements to the Capital Reserve Fund

Since the Commonwealth budget was approved in early July 2022 after the District had approved and submitted its annual budget for 2022-23 in June 2022, Dr. Suski approved the recommendation of Dr. Stokes at the August 23, 2022 School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting to reopen the 2022-2023 General Fund Budget in accordance with Section 616.1 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code to recognize the additional state allocations provided to the Harrisburg School District by the Annual Appropriation Act and authorize resubmission of a revised PDE 2028:

Revenues:

Basic Education Funding:

Original Budget: \$68,727,948

Amended Budget: \$71,297,205

Special Education Funding:

Original Budget: \$6,911,705

Amended Budget: \$7,430,763

Safety Grants:

Original Budget: \$0

Amended Budget: \$437,354

Total Revenues:

Original Budget: \$223,890,348

Amended Budget: \$227,416,017

Expenditures:

Budgetary Reserve:

Original Budget: \$1,266,039

Amended Budget: \$4,791,708

Total Expenditures:
Original Budget: \$223,890,348
Amended Budget: \$227,416,017

The Pennsylvania Economy League presented to the School Board at the September 13, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting.⁴

Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Associates (CRA) was approved as the District's architect of record and has been engaged this quarter in the completion of a feasibility study which will lead to the development of a capital improvement plan for Harrisburg School District. CRA also presented at the September 13, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting regarding proposed renovations to Steele Elementary School.⁵

This quarter Mr. Celmer developed a draft of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Financial Advisory Services which was reviewed by Dr. Stokes, PFM and the District solicitor. The RFP will be issued next quarter.

Mr. Dean Kaplan of PFM presented a draft of the debt management policy to the Receiver and Administration this quarter for review and feedback.

With the support of Boyer & Ritter, Dr. Stokes has evaluated procedures for payroll and has documented several deficiencies that require correction. Most of these areas of weakness are tied directly to Frontline and e-Finance software systems' inability to interface. This results in the need for manual overrides to correct payroll errors that occur. As a result, the District will

⁴ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:56937496-e29f-3779-a49f-edb87d6a7cc1>

⁵ <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:7da29880-5cba-364a-8af0-21d1413a365e>

continue to contract with Boyer & Ritter to assist the District with the rebuilding of a new payroll system and the development of a procedural handbook for the Office of Business Services. There are ongoing efforts by the Business Office staff, with support from Boyer and Ritter, to ensure that reporting is accurate and complete using correct accounting procedures and the updated Pennsylvania Chart of Accounts codes.

7. Revenue

The District has received record amounts of revenue via the ESSER and Level Up funding over the past two years. However, the District recognizes that this windfall is not sustainable over time. Therefore, the Administration remains focused on how to increase revenues. The Amended Recovery Plan calls for an annual tax increase to the Act 1 index which was 5.1% for 2022-23. However, the elected School Board accepted the recommendation of the Business Administrator and Receiver to levy a local real estate tax rate of 30.78 mills for the 2022-23 annual budget, which represents an increase of 1 mill or 3.36%.

Dr. Stokes has evaluated the real estate tax collection data and has recommended that the accounting be adjusted to reflect base amount receipts in comparison to discounted amounts and penalty amounts to ensure a transparent view of the District's tax collections.

Mr. Celmer and Dr. Stokes have worked to develop a list of tax-exempt entities within the Harrisburg School District. Meetings will be scheduled next quarter to discuss options for PILOTS/SILOTS (Payments or Services In Lieu of Taxes).

The ACCESS Accountant hired earlier in 2022 resigned from the position after a very brief tenure, leaving minimal coordination of the District's claims and reimbursement. To increase ACCESS revenue, the District contracted with CAIU to develop the staff pool and submit claims

this quarter. This position has been challenging to fill as an AFSCME support staff role. Consideration should be given to redefine a job description that would allow the position to move to the Act 93 group to attract a highly qualified individual with experience in managing ACCESS billing for a school district. This has the potential to generate a considerable amount of additional revenue for Harrisburg School District due to the high number of students receiving special education and related services.

The Amended Recovery Plan calls for the sale of vacant District properties. The Woodward property remains on the market at an asking price of \$259,000. The District is also resuming discussions on the vacant William Penn building. The District is moving forward with plans to renovate Steele Elementary School with a considerable portion of ESSER III money. This approved plan would spread elementary students out to allow for social distancing, return students to neighborhood schools, reduce the number of students walking to Ben Franklin Elementary School through highly traveled areas, and allow sufficient space to offer a Pre-K Counts program in each elementary building. Quality early childhood education is essential to students' long-term academic success.

The District also received the following entitlement grants in this first quarter:

- Physical Safety Grant: \$281,677
- Mental Health Grant: \$281,677
- Refugee School Impact Grant, Afghanistan Supplemental Allocation: \$52,074

8. Workforce

New teacher induction was held on from August 15 – 18, 2022. A total of 72 new employees were inducted into the District. 36% of the new hires are minorities. This is double the number of new hires of color from 2021.

Staff Development days were held for all District employees on August 22 – 24, 2022. Convocation Day was held on August 23 at John Harris High School.

Staffing deficiencies across the District will require consideration of higher salary increases to address several years of step freezes for professional employees in prior years. As of the start of the 2022-23 school year, 30 of the 571 budgeted professional positions across the District remained vacant, and 48 of 220 budgeted support staff positions were unfilled. To settle union contracts and attract and retain qualified persons in professional and support staff positions, it was necessary to exceed the recommended flat salary increase of 1.5% outlined in the Amended Recovery Plan. The Receiver will be submitting a proposed revision to the Amended Recovery Plan to Judge Tully at the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas for consideration. The proposed amendments will consider the human capital crisis that has occurred since the approval of the Amended Recovery Plan submitted and approved in July 2021. Post-pandemic school districts are experiencing the effects of a teacher and paraprofessional shortage unlike anything ever seen before. To compete with other neighboring school districts and employers in the marketplace outside of public education, it will be necessary to contemplate increased salaries. AFSCME only narrowly ratified the proposed contract in August 2022. This three-year agreement increased wages across all employee categories, provided a retention bonus, and an inflationary bonus. In exchange, the District was able to eliminate proration and reduce overtime costs to time worked above 40 hours per week as opposed to time worked over 8 hours per day.

The District will be working with actuaries to look at health care costs as the District begins the next round of contract negotiations with the teachers' union (HEA). Local and national trends for medical insurance are projecting 6 – 8% increases for self-insured plans. Ms. Zula is

working with the District's broker to obtain actual claims experience data and current coverage and participation to obtain estimated rates as the District begins the budgeting process for 2023-24 in the coming months.