



OFFICE OF THE RECEIVER
QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD Q2 2023-2024

Dr. William H. Kerr, Receiver

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1. Authority and Purpose

Consistent with the Financial Recovery Act 141 of 2012, the Duquesne City School District Financial Recovery Plan was issued on February 11, 2013, and implemented on April 2, 2013. On November 12, 2020, a Fourth Amendment was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and final approval granted by the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas on November 16, 2020. In 2023 - 2024, a Fifth Amended Recovery Plan for academics and finances will be developed with strategic and operational goals for continuous school improvement and sustainability.

Section 672-A (b) (2) of the Public-School Code of Pennsylvania requires a Quarterly Report for the Secretary of Education; therefore, the Quarterly Progress Report for **FY Q2-2023-2024 – October 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023**, is provided herein.

2. School District Benefits of Receivership

Receivership of the School District was a result of fiscal instability and poor academic performance, considering all aspects of financially distressed operations. The benefits of Receivership have preserved, protected, and enhanced the value of assets through a variety of assistance including, but not limited to, an advance of state subsidies, a transitional loan, targeted grants, and professional development programs funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Under Receivership, the School District has been able to be more efficient to secure, manage, and stabilize assets from further deterioration. Equally important, liabilities and contested financial matters have been eliminated. District policies and procedures have been implemented and restrictions enacted for proper accounting by effectively managing cash flow, debt service, and timely payment of all financial obligations. Receivership has provided an intense level of intervention for student achievement and growth, professional development, and financial accountability – a triangular relationship for continuous school improvement.

Pursuant to Act 141 of 2012 and the implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan in 2013, the various Court appointed Receivers and the Department of Education assigned Chief Recovery Officers for the Duquesne City School District have been an integral part of the Financial Recovery Plan, as amended. Each has collaborated through interactive dialogue with key stakeholders of the School District, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, and Public Financial Management.

Every fiscal quarter since 2013 – 2014, the Duquesne City School District has been in good financial standing. There have been no unpaid or contested invoices; and, all payroll, benefit expenditures, debt service obligations and tuition payments have been made in a timely manner. There is no threatened or pending litigation against the Duquesne City School District. Further, the School District is unaware of any other unasserted claims or assessments involving the School District.

3. Executive Summary

Concerted efforts for continuous school improvement of curriculum, instruction, and assessment are an integral part of the Duquesne City School District delivery system for educational programs and services based on collaborative and professional working relationships among the administration, faculty, and support Act staff. Financial sustainability, transparency, and accountability – including updates of projections as part of the Annual Budget planning and approval process – are also an integral part of continuous efforts for school improvement.

Quarterly Progress Report FY Q2-2023-2024 Highlights

- Act 35 of 2023 significantly amended Section 1607 of the School Code (24 P.S. 16-1607) in two significant ways. The first changes the calculation of tuition for Duquesne students who attend either the West Mifflin Area School District or the East Allegheny School District. Formerly, the statute provided that tuition increases for each year shall be the Act 1 Index. Under the new legislation, tuition will be calculated by multiplying the tuition rate for the previous school year by the average of the most recent percentage increase in the statewide average weekly wage and the employment cost index as defined in Act 1. It is the School District’s understanding that this will result in lower tuition increases than would have resulted under the prior formula to the benefit of Duquesne and to the detriment of West Mifflin and East Allegheny.

The second major change to Section 1607 of the School Code Act specifically requires that any school district that has eliminated its high school program pursuant to Section 1607 and subsequently wants to reopen its High School Program must first obtain the approval of the Secretary of Education. While this may have been implicitly required under the prior law, it is now statutorily mandated. The Secretary of Education is required to consider several factors prior to this approval. In order to reopen the high school, Duquesne must submit a specific written plan to the Secretary of Education. (See #13 for more information)

- The Lego League students participated in the annual Regional Lego League competition. Duquesne students came in first place, for the second year in a row in Core Values and received call backs for Core Values, Innovation and Robotic Design. Call backs indicate that the team came in the top ten of sixty total teams who participated in the competition. The Lego League competition was held in December at Aliquippa High School.
- Under the ESSER Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation Reports, the Superintendent of Schools provides Advisory Committee updates during the Receiver Business Meetings.
- The primary goal of the Duquesne K-8 School is to be recognized as a “turnaround school” and a model for rebuilding educational programs, services, and activities in a financially distressed school district.

- The 2023 – 2024 Pre-K Counts program continues to be operated and staffed by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and grant funded by PDE. The quality pre-kindergarten program provides a strong start for children and for those who may also have language barriers (English not as the first language), a disability or developmental delay, or other issues that consider children at risk for failing in school.
- The 2023 – 2024 Head Start program continues to be operated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and promotes school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from families with low income. The program engages parents or other key family members in positive relationships, with a focus on family well-being for successful learning outcomes and support for children.
- As of December 31, 2023, Duquesne K-8 student enrollment was 472 (adjusted by one less student as reported in the December 2023 Monthly Update), including 70 ELL students. This includes fifteen students enrolled in Duquesne’s online academy classes.
- Current secondary (9-12) enrollment of Duquesne resident students at West Mifflin and East Allegheny is 255.
- Annual tuition to be paid by Duquesne for students attending schools elsewhere in 2023 – 2024 is projected to be \$8,868,028.
- Current charter school enrollment K-12 is 201.
- Steel Center Career and Technical Education enrollment is thirty (30); CTE tuition per student is estimated to be \$5,969 for 2023 – 2024.
- Mon Valley Special School student enrollment is six (6) and Sunrise School enrollment is one (1) with an overall estimated tuition cost of \$485,000 for 2023 – 2024.
- The Receiver Advisory Committee, as prescribed by Act 141 of 2012 – Section 654-A, will meet five times in 2023 – 2024. Virtual meetings were conducted on October 10 and December 12; remaining meetings are scheduled for February 13, April 9 and June 11. Invited representatives include parents, teachers, administrators, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a neighboring school district superintendent of schools, community-at-large, and board secretary. One vacancy remains for a charter school representative.
- The School District confirmed dates and times for monthly 2023 – 2024 PDE meetings with the Receiver and designated District Administrators. Quarterly PDE meetings with Receivers, Chief Recovery Officers, and Financial Advisors will continue throughout 2023 – 2024.

4. Supplemental Information

The DCSD website, dukecitysd.org, provides the general public a historical summary of the School District's severe financial recovery status, its receivership, and criteria for exiting recovery status. The Financial Recovery Plan, as amended, and Quarterly Progress Reports are posted for accountability, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.

“Rediscover Duquesne!” is an electronic monthly newsletter providing information and updates to parents, families, and community members about the School District. The production is in cooperation with the Duquesne Administration and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Communications Department.

5. Regular Education – Student Enrollment

Duquesne K-8 student enrollments, for 2022 – 2023 and 2023 – 2024, are displayed on the following table.

**Duquesne K - 8 School
Student Enrollment
December 31, 2023**

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sept 2022	47	52	50	58	45	46	52	58	41	451
Dec 2022	53	55	50	57	45	45	51	58	43	457
Mar 2023	56	55	50	56	46	43	47	61	44	458
June 2023	57	57	48	54	48	43	47	58	46	458
Sept 2023	55	53	60	45	52	47	41	48	54	455
Dec 2023	58	52	62	47	54	47	42	45	56	472

6. Regular Education – Sections, Class Size, and ESL Data

The following tabulation reflects current regular education sections and average class size for each grade level.

**Duquesne K - 8 School
Regular Education Sections, Class Size, and ESL Enrollment
December 31, 2023**

Grade	Sections (Classroom Size)	Enrollment	ESL Enrollment
Kindergarten	3 (18.3)	58	10
First Grade	3 (17.6)	52	6
Second Grade	3 (20.0)	62	8
Third Grade	3 (15.0)	47	7
Fourth Grade	3 (17.3)	54	7
Fifth Grade	3 (15.6)	47	9
Sixth Grade	2 (20.5)	42	7
Seventh Grade	3 (16.0)	45	7
Eighth Grade	3 (18.0)	56	9
TOTALS	26	472	70

7. Average Student Attendance

The following chart reflects two years of attendance.

**Duquesne City School District
Average Student Attendance
2022 - 2023 and 2023 - 2024**

2022-2023 Month	Day Count	Avg. Monthly % Present	Avg. % Absent Count	Avg. Excused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count	Avg. Unlawful Count
Aug.	8	97.23%	2.77%	1.62	1.62	0
Sept.	22	90.89%	9.11%	5.22	11.63	0
Oct.	21	92.81%	7.19%	7.59	9.09	0
Nov.	22	92.42%	7.58%	6.15	11.36	0
Dec.	22	90.99%	9.01%	2.91	18	0
Jan.	22	91.83%	8.17%	4.9	13.81	0
Feb.	20	90.68%	9.32%	5.54	15.69	0
Mar.	23	91.17%	8.83%	4.23	15.91	0
Apr.	20	96.29%	9.71%	4.84	17.0	0
May	23	89.49%	10.51%	4.71	18.82	0
June	11	87.3%	12.7%	3.09	19.9	0
Total	214	91.4%	8.6%	5.97	13.2	0

2023-2024 Month	Day Count	Avg. Monthly % Present	Avg. % Absent Count	Avg. Excused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count	Avg. Unlawful Count
Aug	8	92.5%	7.5%	1.87	11.25	0
Sept	21	92.18%	7.82%	2.71	12.23	0
Oct	22	93.03%	6.97%	3.56	10.59	0
Nov	22	92.9%	7.1%	3.31	9.54	0
Dec	21	89.95%	10.05%	3.73	13.76	0

8. Significant Observations

Q2-2023-2024 student enrollment is 472 and the ESL enrollment is 70 students, indicating an increase of seventeen (17) students, including seven (10) ESL more students ending Q1-2023-2024.

Student attendance has increased slightly. Continuous efforts are made between the staff and parents / guardians to improve daily student attendance.

9. Student Enrichment and Support Programs

Boys & Girls Club - 33 students enrolled (Grades K-8)

Uplift Center - 7 students enrolled (Grades 3-8)

Oasis Tutoring - 11 Students are receiving services (K-3)

The partnerships continue with Eat n' Park and the United Way to provide food to the families and community members of Duquesne, including backpacks of food for students who qualify on the weekends. The Boys and Girls Club partnership continues with after-school activities for Duquesne City students.

School level personnel are beginning the initial brainstorming conversations around planning for the school-wide Black History Month Celebration and Valentine Day Celebrations.

School District personnel are transporting all accounted for McKinney-Vento families daily to and from school. There are fifteen (15) students that qualify under McKinney-Vento. All primary parents of families experiencing homelessness have been given the opportunity to utilize the Duquesne Family Center, Duquesne City School District, and AIU resources depending on their specific needs.

School District personnel have identified three in-district foster care students.

Q2 discipline behavior incidents reportable to the state are 244. With the sustained efforts of PBIS programming and MTSS in place, student discipline continues to have support and interventions for positive and successful outcomes. In addition to Restorative Practices through the University of Pittsburgh, the following support services are highlighted:

- The School District continues to engage with Communities in Schools / Pittsburgh-Allegheny County (CISPAC) which has been a highly successful collaborative partnership among educators, students, parents / guardians, and families. CISPAC strives to surround students with a community of support so every student can succeed in school and life. The CISPAC Coordinator meets with sixth-eighth grade students to provide socio-emotional enrichment and other support services.
- Pressley Ridge, a non-profit social services agency, provides Emotional Support Services for grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Auberle, a non-profit social service agency, provides support for students through school-based therapy and SAP screening services. Auberle will also provide grade level support through their Stop Now and Think (SNAP) program to 5th Grade students beginning in January 2024.

10. State Monitoring

Refer to Special Education State Monitoring Report, No. 15, B.

11. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

A. Curriculum and Instruction

Duquesne worked with the AIU to complete a root cause analysis of Math programming and instruction. Consultants worked to interview administrators and review curriculum guides, pacing

calendars, and curricular materials used to support Mathematics K-8. Consultants also visited classrooms and sat with teachers during planning meetings and periods. District level administrators were presented the findings and results in January. Based on results, workshops and additional professional developments sessions will be implemented during the second semester.

Teachers continue to engage in weekly meetings in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) for grade level and content area sessions. Teachers have the opportunity at grade levels where they examine classroom and student level data to drive instruction as well as meeting vertically across grade levels and across content areas. Data includes benchmark assessments, daily exit tickets, anecdotal notes, as well as proficiency data from online programming. During content area meetings, teachers discuss content, pacing, and best instructional practices specific to their content areas.

Moonshot sessions with teachers allow for Professional Development on Personalized Learning including eight sessions this fall and will continue into the second semester. These sessions have allowed District and School administrators to have dedicated time to work with teachers on topics related to personalized learning and data driven instruction.

Duquesne continued work with the Learner Centered Collaborative on Personalized Learning to develop a graduate profile which has been completed. The next step is working with Getting Smart, an organization that will assist with developing the competencies for high school and the learning professions for each grade band. Our Portrait of Dukes will serve as a comprehensive summary of Duquesne students' academic achievements, skills, and personal attributes, providing a clear snapshot of their readiness for real world experiences. Additionally, it serves to encourage lifelong learning and personal development, emphasizing the importance of continuous improvement and adaptability beyond K-12 education.

B. Professional Development

The School District Administration and Instructional Leadership Team continues to participate in professional development sessions and school turnaround through the University of Virginia (UVA) Partners in Educational Leadership Program (PELP.) Administrative support focuses on effective leadership skills for the Building Principal and how to improve and support building-wide instruction.

First Semester Completed	First Semester Completed	Second Semester Planned on
New Teacher Induction	CPI Training	Structured Literacy
World of Work / RIASEC	Restorative Practices	Professional Ethics
Curriculum Google Site Updates and Canvas	Arts Education Collaborative Curriculum Writing Special Subjects	Culturally Responsive Instruction
Personalized Learning, Learner Center Collaborative	Curricular Materials Training (iLit, Gizmo, Words Their Way)	Math Workshops
MTSS/Special Education / PBIS	Digital Fabrication and Engineering Lessons (STEELS)	
Active Shooter Training	Diaz, Inc.	

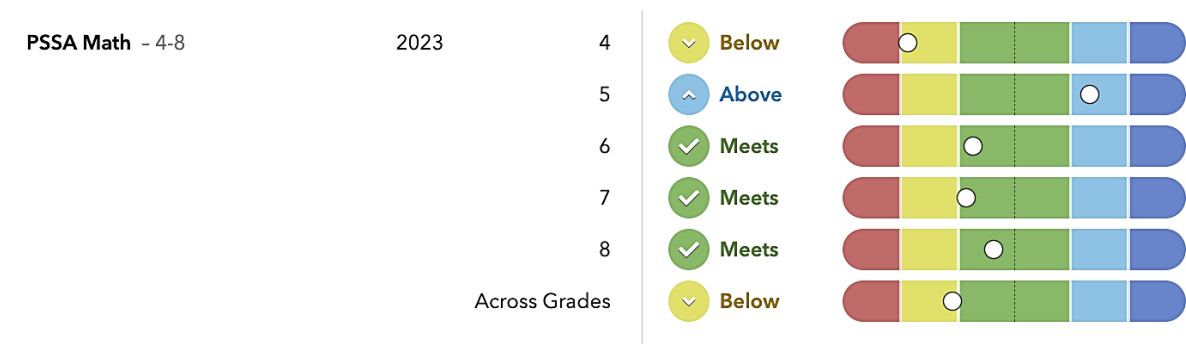
C. Assessment and Growth Scores – 2022-2023

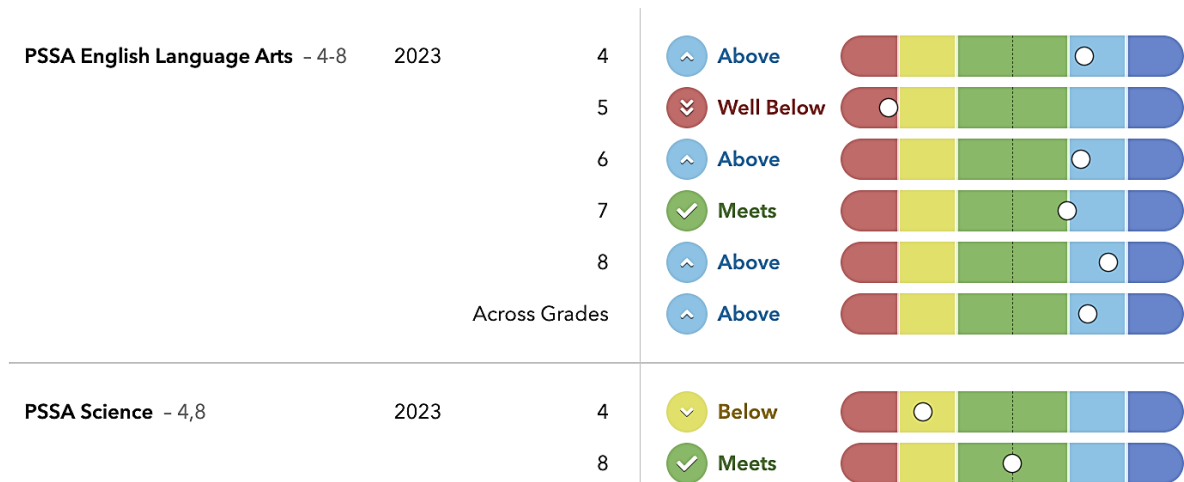
2022-2023 PSSA Results						
ELA Results						
	BB	B	P	A	A & P	Change from 21-22
Grade 3	44%	35%	21%	0	21%	13%
Grade 4	50%	30%	16%	2%	18%	3%
Grade 5	47%	37%	16%	0	16%	10%
Grade 6	24%	5%	21%	2%	23%	9%
Grade 7	24%	60%	16%	0%	16%	3%
Grade 8	46%	37%	13%	4%	14%	N/A
Math Results						
	BB	B	P	A	A & P	Change from 21-22
Grade 3	69%	23%	6%	2%	8%	1%
Grade 4	78%	15%	7%	0	7%	5%
Grade 5	88%	10%	2%	0	2%	Same
Grade 6	84%	16%	0	0	0	2%
Grade 7	83%	12%	5%	0	5%	1%
Grade 8	93%	5%	2%	0	2%	N/A
Science Results						
	BB	B	P	A	A & P	Change from 21-22
Grade 4	43%	33%	22%	2%	24%	11%
Grade 8	41%	20%	29%	0	29%	N/A

Duquesne K-8 Assessment Results Indicate

- Increase in ELA proficiency except for Grades 3 and 4.
- Increase in Math proficiency except for Grades 3 and 6.
- First year having Grade 8 participate in the assessment.

Despite low proficiency scores, PVAAS reports that overall students are meeting growth targets except for Grade 4 Math, Grade 5 ELA, and Grade 4 Science. Changes were made to those grade levels and content areas to address the lack of growth. ELA growth continues to be an area of strength for the District. To address the lack of growth in Math, the School District has partnered with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a root cause analysis of math programming and will work to implement recommended changes. The administration has scheduled intervention periods for both ELA and Math, including uniform resources and lesson plans across grade levels.





12. Career Development / World of World

The “World of Work” program, in cooperation with the Western PA Learning 2025 Alliance, AASA and the Grable Foundation, Pittsburgh, provides students with connections to real world work experiences. The program involves teachers and students at Duquesne City, Elizabeth Forward, Avonworth and South Fayette School Districts. The program includes a Career Interest Survey, referred to as RIASEC, which categorizes six themes: Realistic (doers), Investigative (thinkers), Artistic (creators), Social (helpers), Enterprising (persuaders) and Conventional (organizers).

The “World of Work” framework continues to evolve throughout all classrooms in grades first through fifth grade. The primary goal of implementing the RIASEC model is to promote career awareness and exploration in the early stages of elementary education. By introducing these concepts early on, educators aim to foster self-awareness among students, to introduce them to diverse careers, and to develop goal-setting skills.

As the third nine-week approaches, all students in grades first through fifth grade have an understanding of their unique strengths and interests and have been exposed to numerous career units that have been embedded into their core curricular classes. Students have had unique opportunities to be exposed to real-life professionals such as firefighters, chemists, and musicians who have visited Duquesne K-8 to share their career experiences. The School District and the students have been featured in local news footage to highlight the “World of Work” experiences that are taking place. In addition, Duquesne administrators and teachers have presented at regional conferences. Conference participants, who are interested in how the initial program, which was initiated in Duquesne and other partner organizations, have an opportunity to build an implementation plan for their school districts.

13. New Schools Venture Fund / High School Comprehensive Planning

Designated Duquesne administrators continue to work on the 2023 – 2024 New Schools Venture Fund Comprehensive Plan with supplemental responsibilities for the potential re-opening of the Duquesne High School. In addition to continuous individual and small group work by Administrators, monthly large group sessions are held with the Receiver for verbal updates, discussion, and submission of monthly written progress reports.

A Statement by the Receiver regarding Comprehensive Planning was discussed in an Administrative Meeting prior to the Receiver Business Meeting on December 5, 2023, and then, it was shared with the elected Board of School Directors. The Statement was distributed to Dr. Debora Carrera, Special Advisor to the Secretary of Education, which included a December 7th follow-up telephone conversation initiated by PDE.

Act 35 of 2023 significantly amended Section 1607 of the School Code (24 P.S. 16-1607). The change to Section 1607 of the School Code specifically requires that any school district that has eliminated its high school program pursuant to Section 1607 and subsequently wants to reopen its High School Program must first obtain the approval of the Secretary of Education. While this may have been implicitly required under the prior law, it is now statutorily mandated.

The Secretary of Education is required to consider several factors prior to this approval. In order to reopen the high school, Duquesne must submit a specific written plan to the Secretary of Education which includes the following factors:

- The financial sustainability of this plan to reopen the high school;
- The demographic trends of Duquesne;
- The proposed faculty levels and curriculum offerings;
- The contents of the most recent report required under Section 1607;
- The involvement of the current providing districts (West Mifflin and East Allegheny) in the plan to reopen the high school; and any other information as determined by the Secretary of Education.

14. Technology, Digital Learning, and Innovation

The School District partnership with All Lines Technology continues to provide Level 1 IT support services. The Allegheny Intermediate Unit continues to provide Level 2 and 3 Network Administration support.

The Network Closets on Levels 3, 6, and 7 were cleaned and reconfigured which is a benefit to free up working ports for the School District vape sensors recently purchased and installed in the K-8 School.

A new Firewall, due to the end-of-life of the previous one, was installed and configured which will provide internet security and content filtering for all School District users.

The ARP ESSER Audit examined and approved the electronic device inventory management system which was implemented during the 2022 – 2023 school year.

New iPads were distributed to grades 4 and 5, completing final designation as a K-8 Apple School.

15. Special Education Services

A. Special Education Enrollment

The Special Education Department is fully staffed with a total of ten special education teachers, one speech and language pathologist, and one cyber academy teacher. At the end of the 2023 –

2024 Second Quarter, DCSD had a total of 122 students with IEPs who are being supported: in-district (103), specialized educational placements (14), and Duquesne Cyber Academy (5). Below is a breakdown of students with IEPs enrollment and primary disability category.

Disability Category	Number of Students
Other Health Impairment	37
Specific Learning Disability	38
Emotional Disturbance	15
Intellectual Disability	4
Autism	11
Blind / Visually Impaired	1
Hearing Impaired	1
Speech and Language	15

B. State Monitoring

During the second quarter of the 2023 – 2024 school year, a strong emphasis has been placed on improving FSA No. 19 “Personnel Development”. This was found to be an area of need, based upon the results of the spring 2023 Cyclical Monitoring for Continuous Improvement (CMCI) audit. During the second quarter of the 2023 – 2024 school year, the training listed below was provided to special education personnel. Training will be ongoing.

Date	Title	Audience
10/27/2023	Writing Effective IEP goals	Special Ed. Teachers
11/01/2023	New Forms – PWN and Request for Consent for RR	Special Ed. Teachers
12/06/2023	Sensory Room Supports	Special Ed. Teachers

C. Extended School Year Programming

During the month of January 2024, regression and recoupment data will be collected for all students with IEPs in which ESY eligibility has yet to be determined. Caseload managers will use regression and recoupment data to confirm whether students are eligible under two of the seven criteria. For those students who qualify for ESY, IEP revision meetings will be held in February and March 2024.

D. 8th to 9th Grade Transition of Students with IEPs

PASA Testing was conducted on January 9, 2024. The Special Education Departments from Duquesne City SD and West Mifflin Area School District (WMASD) met with personnel from the Bureau of Special Education, PDE, to discuss a plan for transitioning 8th grade students with IEPs, GIEPs, and 504s. The Director of Special Education from WMASD will begin attending annual IEP meetings for all eighth-grade students who plan to enroll at WMASD.

16. Student Services

A. IST / DSAP Q2 Data

IST		DSAP	*
Total Students Referred	35	Total Students Referred	33
Referrals Reopened	0	Referrals Reopened	0
Cases Closed	5	Cases Closed	2
Cases Active	30	Cases Active	31

*McKinney-Vento Data included

B. McKinney-Vento Summary

School District personnel transported all accounted for McKinney-Vento families daily to and from school. There are currently eleven (11) students identified. All primary parents of families experiencing homelessness have been given the opportunity to utilize available resources depending on specific needs from the Duquesne Family Center, Duquesne City School District, and Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

17. Mental Health and Behavior Support Services

Behavioral and Emotional Support Team (BEST) Pressley Ridge classroom support continues with full staffing and professional development in emotional support classrooms. There has been a marked improvement in students having whole-child needs met, a testament to the support in place. This is evidenced by increased attendance, improved academic reports, decreased security calls, and decreased discipline reports for students on teacher caseloads. The program closely monitors student needs to ensure resources are available and provided when needed.

The Mental Health and Behavior Support team has focused on solidifying processes related to how student services are monitored and how to ensure accountability for student interventions. Adjusting collaboration methods in meetings has increased staff abilities to identify and implement support for students. The BEST classrooms are running smoothly, with regular time for team meetings and engaging with each other. Venture Outdoors provides supplemental education to the students in the Special Education classrooms and provides similar services to students who participate in the Boys and Girls Club.

Moving into the 3rd Quarter, a pilot of the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) will be implemented. This room will provide acute response to our students in need who are expressing themselves behaviorally. Developed as an alternative to suspension, the ALC will have a certified Teacher and Behavior Interventionist staff available to meet their educational and behavioral needs and help students realign themselves to achieve success. The mental health and behavior support team will continue to implement support and monitor students' response to interventions.

18. District Cyber Academy and Marketing / Recruiting Plan

The District Cyber Academy, in partnership with Allegheny Intermediate Unit / Waterfront Learning, provides asynchronous online learning through the platform, Accelerate. Parents inquiring about cyber education are encouraged to take advantage of the District Cyber Academy. School District teachers provide online instruction and are available for student and parent

consultations. The District Cyber program is research-based and embraces best practices for online learning, offering Duquesne children a flexible and high-quality curriculum and instruction. A District cyber student has all the benefits of a Duquesne student, including participation in all programs, activities, sports, and clubs.

The Marketing / Recruiting Plan, as amended for 2023 – 2024, is a continuous effort to increase the overall student enrollment at the Duquesne K-8 School and to reduce the amount of charter / cyber and brick and mortar charter school tuition paid by the School District. The plan includes the use of current resources, social media, and personnel to engage the community in legacy-building and to share the traditions, pride, and history of Duquesne City School District. **“REDISCOVER DUQUESNE”** is the marketing brand to promote a flexible, online cyber education option for parents and families.

19. Financial Recovery Plan (YTD)

In 2023 – 2024, a Fifth Amended Recovery Plan for academics and finances is in the process of being developed, including strategic and operational goals for continuous school improvement and financial sustainability.

20. Budget and Finance (YTD)

The 2023 – 2024 Final General Fund Budget was implemented, effective July 1, 2023. The Budget includes Revenues of \$22,256,893 and Expenditures of \$22,046,254. The budget also includes a millage increase of one mill (19.48 mills) but is offset by a millage reduction provided by the Property Tax Reduction Subsidy. The proposed net effect is a 6.63% real estate tax increase compared to 2022. The median assessed homestead property will pay \$23.78 more for the year or \$1.98 more per month.

The Business Manager completed and filed the required September and October 2023 – 2024 Cash Flow Report for the Department of Education. It is intended to be a monthly report, with some flexibility, which shares financial data by the School District accounting for local revenue and expenditures and PDE accounting for state and federal funds and deductions.

Every fiscal quarter since 2013 – 2014, the Duquesne City School District has been in good financial standing. There have been no unpaid or contested invoices; and, all payroll, benefit expenditures, debt service obligations and tuition payments have been made in a timely manner. The AFR was filed November 28, 2023. The District expects the 2022 – 2023 Audited Financial Statements and Auditor Opinion letter to School District officials by January 31, 2024.

The Governor’s 2023 – 2024 Enacted Budget results in an overall 10.2% increase for the Duquesne City School District, as follows:

- Basic Subsidy Funding \$14,537,262
- Special Education Subsidy \$ 945,363

The Receiver, Superintendent, and Business Manager continue to correspond with Public Financial Management consultants regarding eight-year model assumptions and financial projections. Subject to the New Schools Venture Fund Comprehensive Plans relative for the potential re-opening of the Duquesne High School, District officials will schedule additional PFM

meetings to ensure effective communication throughout the planning process. Consideration of financial stability and sustainability for the School District continues to be an integral part of the conversations.

A significant financial challenge facing the School District continues to be the rising costs of charter school tuition. Actual charter school rates, as calculated on the PDE-363 for FY 2023 – 2024 reflect federal ESSER funding revenue. The tuition rate for each non-special education charter school student for 2023 – 2024 was \$13,558.24 (\$1,636 lower than the previous year) based on actual, calculated rates. For each special education student who attended a charter school, the student rate was \$36,884.20 (\$2,052 lower than the previous year) based on actual, calculated rates. The District continues to face an unprecedented special education calculation due to the nature of the formula assuming a 16% special education population. Because the District’s special education population is appreciably higher at 26.36%, the formula incorrectly divides total special education expenditures by a smaller number of students than are enrolled at Duquesne.

The following chart provides a visual with specific data to Duquesne’s Average Daily Membership for 2021 – 2022; Special Education Population with 16% assumption required by PDE; Actual Special Education Population of the District at 26.36%; and Additional Cost to the District using the required 16% assumption.

Categories and Descriptions	Average Daily Memberships	Special Education Tuition Rate for 2023-2024	Number of Special Education Students at Charter Schools as of December 31, 2023	Charter School Tuition Cost for Special Education Students
DCSD Average Daily Membership for 2021-2022	928.348	-	-	-
Special Education Population with 16% assumption required by PDE	148.536	\$36,884.20	45	\$1,659,789.00
Actual Special Education Population of District is 26.36%	244.713	\$297,716.67	45	\$1,247,250.10
Additional Cost to District using required 16% assumption	-	\$9,167.53	-	\$412,538.90

21. General Fund Balance Analysis

Duquesne City School District General Fund Balance Analysis June 30, 2023

GF Balance Analysis June 30, 2023		
Non-spendable		
Pre-paid	\$135,385	-
Other	-	-
Total non-spendable	-	\$135,385
Restricted	-	-
Committed	-	-
Unassigned	-	\$1,231,740

GF Balance Analysis June 30, 2023		
Assigned		250,000
Total fund balance as of June 30, 2022 (audited)	-	\$452,285
Surplus (deficit) for FY 2022-2023	-	1,164,840
Total fund balance as of June 30, 2022 (audited)	-	\$1,617,125

22. Bonds and Notes Payable

The Department of Education approved a Transitional Loan Agreement Amendment in 2022 for remaining amortized payments: June 30, 2024 - \$221,667; and June 30, 2025 - \$221,666.

A summary of bonds and notes payable is shown in the following table.

Bonds and Notes Payable December 31, 2023

Fiscal Year Ending June 30	Bonds Payable	Notes Payable	Total Bonds and Notes Payable	Total Annual Debt Service
2014*	9,272,501	\$1,000,000	10,272,501	-
2015*	6,616,667	2,335,000	8,951,667	2,926,206
2016*	6,110,883	1,500,000	7,610,833	1,553,989
2017*	5,590,000	1,000,000	6,590,000	1,224,589
2018*	5,054,167	1,000,000	6,054,167	729,888
2019*	4,503,333	850,000	5,353,333	883,639
2020*	3,122,500	790,000	3,912,500	1,610,764
2021*	11,661,667	730,000	12,391,667	3,105,492
2022**	10,980,834	665,000	11,645,834	1,075,424
2023**	10,935,000	443,334	11,378,333	584,191
2024**	10,319,167	221,666	10,540,833	1,153,990
2025**	9,803,334	-	9,803,334	1,042,391
2026**	9,337,500	-	9,337,500	758,374
2027**	8,856,667	-	8,856,667	756,174

*Audited financial statements

**Projected

23. Receiving Schools, Tuition Enrollments, and Projected Costs

After personnel costs for the Duquesne City School District's staff, the next largest categories of spending are tuition costs for secondary schools and charter schools. These two costs contribute to the School District's long-term financial challenges.

Current student tuition enrollments are tabulated below. The chart also compares the list of enrollments to the prior Quarter's totals to give some perspective on student enrollment trends.

**Duquesne City School District
Tuition Enrollment
December 31, 2023**

Receiving Schools	Grades	Students Sept 30	Students Dec 31	Projected 2023-2024 Tuition
West Mifflin Area School District	9 – 12	220	238	\$4,016,702
East Allegheny School District	9 – 12	17	17	286,907
Charter schools, regular education	K – 6	112	101	1,369,382
Charter schools, special education	K – 6	28	28	1,032,758
Charter schools, regular education	7 – 12	59	54	732,145
Charter schools, special education	7 – 12	17	18	663,916
Special Education schools	K – 12	15	16	766,897
Totals		468	472	\$8,868,028

Changes in individual tuition enrollments in the categories of receiving schools can be seen by comparing enrollments from September 30, 2023, to December 31, 2023, in the table above. Enrollment figures for East Allegheny and West Mifflin will be reconciled at the end of FY 2023 – 2024. The table above includes Allegheny Intermediate Unit special education classroom tuition, whereas the tuition schedule on the Annual Financial Report does not include these costs.

There are currently 255 secondary students in grades 9-12 in the East Allegheny and West Mifflin Area School Districts. Tuition costs for these students continue to increase each year; and, raising taxes to the Act I Index still fails to cover one-half of the annual increase.

The School District received correspondence from the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding the calculated student tuition rate of \$16,876.90 that Duquesne will pay East Allegheny and West Mifflin School Districts in 2023 – 2024, based on the original Settlement Agreement of 2017 and Section 1607(b)(4) of the Pennsylvania School Code.

Act 35 of 2023 significantly amended Section 1607 of the School Code (24 P.S. 16-1607). It changes the calculation of tuition for Duquesne students who attend either the West Mifflin Area School District or the East Allegheny School District. Formerly, the statute provided that tuition increases for each year shall be the Act 1 Index. Under the new legislation, tuition will be calculated by multiplying the tuition rate for the previous school year by the average of the most recent percentage increase in the statewide average weekly wage and the employment cost index as defined in Act 1. It is the School District’s understanding that this will result in lower tuition increases than would have resulted under the prior formula to the benefit of Duquesne and to the detriment of West Mifflin and East Allegheny.

The Commonwealth’s Independent Fiscal Office indicates that the District’s Projected Base Act 1 Index is expected to decrease slowly as shown in the chart below; however, the District’s tuition rate is expected to be \$19,932 by the 2029 – 2030 school year.

Duquesne City School District, Act 1 Index, 2023-2024 to 2029-2030

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
Projected Base Index	4.1%	5.3%	4.0%	3.6%	3.2%	3.1%	3.0%
Projected Act 1 Index	6.7%	8.8%	6.6%	5.9%	5.3%	5.1%	5.0%

24. Duquesne City Education Foundation

The Duquesne City Education Foundation articles of incorporation and by-laws as a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit, charitable organization was established. The Foundation supports Duquesne City School District by encouraging innovation, recognizing excellence, creating vital partnerships, and developing community philanthropy. It is expected that Foundation revenues will help support academic programs, athletics, and other school community activities.

25. Human Resources – Personnel / Staffing Assignments

Settlements and other Personnel Actions

There were no personnel settlements and releases during this Quarter.

Personnel / Staffing Assignments

The following chart presents a summary of staffing at the DCSD as of December 31, 2023. Parentheses indicate changes from the September 30, 2023, summary.

**Duquesne City School District
2023-2024 Staffing Summary
December 31, 2023**

DCSD Staffing Summary			
Professional staff (+1)	49	Administrators	7.5
Instructional support staff (+1)	18	Coordinators and supervisors	4
Other support staff	15	Confidential exempt staff (+1)	3

Staffing changes reflect resignations, replacements, and new hires to meet the changing needs of the School District:

Following the resignation of one Paraprofessional and three vacancies from the previous quarter, two Paraprofessionals were hired. There are currently no vacancies.

The Executive Assistant to the Superintendent / Board Secretary / Food Services Coordinator / Open Records Officer was reassigned as the Human Resources Assistant / Board Secretary / Open Records Officer.

An Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Central Office Administrators / Food and Nutrition Services Coordinator was hired.

The School District is currently fully staffed.

The following Board Policies and Administrative Regulations are new or revised and approved during this Quarter:

Administrative Regulations

137-AR-0 Home Education Program Requirements (new)

137-AR-1 Parent / Guardian Letter Home Education Program (new)

137-AR-2 Curriculum Materials Request Form (new)

137.1-AR-0 Extracurricular Participation by Home Education Students (new)

137.1-AR-1 Weekly Eligibility Report (new)

137.2-AR-0 Weekly Eligibility Report (new)

137.2-AR-1 Prioritization and Placement for Participation in Co-curricular Activities and Academic Courses (new)

137.3-AR-0 Prioritization and Placement for Participation in Career and Technical Education Programs (new)

27. Facilities and Property Services – Maintenance and School Safety & Security

A. Maintenance

The annual Fire Panel inspection and the semiannual HVAC unit and boiler service inspections were completed. Several food service kitchen upgrades were completed, including a new heating cabinet, new garbage disposal, and dishwasher repairs. The parking lot electrical unit was replaced, and all security lighting is once again operable. The School District field equipment has been winterized and the truck salt spreader has been installed and mower decks replaced with brushes for snow removal. The City of Duquesne donated an electronic marquee for the K-8 School, which will be displayed above the Kennedy Avenue entrance, for school and community announcements.

The emergency repair of K-8 Building elevator was completed December 11 – 13, 2023 by Schindler Elevator Corporation. An Upgrade Order Agreement for the refurbished hydraulic jacks, which are no longer manufactured, will meet ADA compliances. Additional work will require replacement of elevator valves January 3 – 4, 2024, followed by the state inspection on January 5th. The original maintenance repair quote was \$68,710; however, the valve repair will cost \$9,525. PDE gave provisional approval for APR ESSER Capital Fund use to complete the emergency repairs; final sign-off, including the amended repair quote, by PDE is pending.

B. School Safety & Security

A new evacuation shelter location has been secured at the Saint Joseph Church located at 817 West Grant Avenue, Duquesne.

The Safe2Say Public Service Announcement (PSA) was presented to students in grades six through eight during the month of November.

Gittings Protection Security, Inc. has assigned two new guards who have been properly trained for duties at strategic school building posts. School District security presence has been increased during school events to ensure safety for all students, staff, and visitors.

In accordance with new guidance released by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) plan is in effect for critical emergency responses. The trademark protocols and logo are in partnership with the “I Love U Guys Foundation”, providing guidance to incorporate the new SRP in all PA Commonwealth school districts for using a common language. During a faculty meeting held on November 8, 2023; an SRP presentation was made for implementation. SRP “Emergency Take Action” signage outlining various emergency protocols are displayed in classrooms and key locations throughout the K-8 Duquesne School. The mandated monthly fire drills were conducted. Common areas and classroom placement of new SRP protocols have enhanced building evacuations.

The IT hardware and software dedicated for the security camera system has been updated by the Technology Department. As a result, the efficiency and reliability of the security camera system has improved dramatically. The student E-pass system has been beneficial for security to better monitor student activity and keep students accountable when leaving the classroom.

Security now can use body cameras. The School District purchased six cameras for use in the common areas of the K-8 School and at crossing guard locations. The security camera systems are solely used for student, staff, and community safety; body cameras are assigned to designated personnel and video images are secured and maintained for confidentiality.

28. Governance and Administration

Dr. Sue A. Mariani, Chief School Administrator, is supervised by Dr. William H. Kerr, who was reappointed Receiver, effective March 31, 2022, through April 1, 2025. Dr. Kerr reports to the Duquesne City Board of School Directors, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas. Dr. Kerr reports to Judge Alan D. Hertzberg and to Dr. Khalid N. Mumin, Secretary of Education, via Dr. Debora Carrera, Special Advisor to the Secretary.

The Duquesne City Board of School Directors, with whom the administration meets in Executive Session prior to every Receiver Business Meeting, consists of the following members: (Effective December 5, 2023)

1. Board President Sonya Gooden
2. Board Vice President Rosia Reid
3. School Director Candice Butler-Davis
4. School Director Burton Comensky
5. School Director Laura Elmore
6. School Director Calvin Harris
7. School Director Cedric Robertson
8. School Director (Vacant)
9. School Director (Vacant)

Prior to the December 5, 2023, Receiver Business Meeting, the District Magistrate administered the oath of office to re-elected Board members and signed Election Certificates for respective new terms, 2023 – 2027. The Duquesne City School District is seeking letters of interest to fill two vacancies on the Board of School Directors. The Receiver will appoint two individuals to fill the

unexpired terms for 2023 – 2024 and 2024 – 2025, noting that eligible individuals interested in a Board appointment have until January 12, 2024, to submit a letter of interest to the Board Secretary. Appointments and oath of office will be made official on January 23, 2024, Receiver Business Meeting.

Elected members of the Duquesne City Board of School Directors participated in two Receiver Business Meetings during the Second Quarter: October 24 and December 5, 2023. During the December 5th Receiver Business Meeting, a recess was called to convene a Special Reorganization Board Meeting to elect School Board officers and approve appointments to the Steel Center CTE and Southeastern Mon Valley Special School.

Elected School Board members in attendance at Receiver Business Meeting: October (3) December (5). There was no November RBM scheduled.

29. Next Report

The next Quarterly Progress Report will cover the Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024, January 1 through March 31, 2024. That report is expected to be filed in April 2024.

30. Acknowledgements

The following individuals contributed to this report:

- William H. Kerr, Ed.D., Court-appointed Receiver
- Sue A. Mariani, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
- Jennifer Tressler, Business Manager, B.S., CPA
- Jamie Schmidt, Ed.D., Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Celeste Rudge, M. Ed., Director of Literacy and Innovation
- Alison DeMarco, M. Ed., Director of Technology, Digital Learning and Innovation
- Pam Zackel, M. Ed., Director of Special Education
- Eric Harper, M. Ed., High School Principal-designate
- George Little, MSW, Acting K-8 Principal
- Janice Nuzzo, Ed.D., Acting K-8 Assistant Principal
- Brian Stowell, MBA, Director of Facilities, Transportation, and Safety and Security Director
- Brandon Irdi, Act 44 Safety and Security Coordinator
- Crystal Irdi, Human Resources Assistant / Board Secretary / RTK Officer