

Harrisburg City School District  
Amended Recovery Plan  
2023 – 2024 Report for Quarter 3  
January 1 – March 31, 2024



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**Table of Contents**

Authority and Purpose.....3

District Demographics.....4

Academic Performance.....8

Administration and Governance.....22

Operations.....24

Financial Management.....28

Revenue.....34

Workforce.....34

Act 141 Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.....39

Chief Recovery Officer’s Documentation of Progress on Plan Initiatives..... Appendix

## ***Authority & Purpose***

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 January 1 through March 31, 2024, which is the third quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

The elected School Board and Administration desire to exit receivership at the conclusion of the current three-year cycle, which is set to expire on June 17, 2025. The Harrisburg School District is less than a year away from the time at which the Receiver will need to make a recommendation to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) as to whether the Harrisburg School District is ready to exit receivership. PDE will then make its determination and file the appropriate petition with the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas to either exit receivership or recommend a new three-year cycle of receivership. Chief Recovery Officer, Dr. Travis Waters, is responsible for monitoring the 62 initiatives of the Amended Recovery Plan and advising the Receiver of progress made toward achievement of plan goals. Dr. Waters has provided the Receiver with a [document](#) to supplement this report which provides an

update on the status of each initiative of the plan. The Receiver also acknowledges the contribution of Dr. Waters in providing the academic data analysis for this report.

***District Demographics***

Student enrollment in the District’s virtual program has increased slightly this quarter, but overall District enrollment has stabilized with a net increase of only three (3) students over the past three months.

<b><i>End of Quarter</i></b>	<b><i>Brick-and-Mortar</i></b>	<b><i>Harrisburg Virtual Learning Academy</i></b>	<b><i>Total Enrollment</i></b>
<i>September 2023</i>	5932	457	6389
<i>December 2023</i>	5804	441	6245
<i>March 2024</i>	5780	468	6248

A breakdown of enrollment by building appears below:

<b>Building</b>	<b>June 2023</b>	<b>September 2023</b>	<b>December 2023</b>	<b>March 2024</b>	<b>Change in Enrollment</b>
Ben Franklin	705	730	750	762	+12
Camp Curtin	475	491	475	480	+15
Cougar Academy	316	324	315	309	-6
Downey	376	387	408	411	+3
Foose	486	507	509	501	-8
Harrisburg High: John Harris Campus	1370	1419	1343	1335	-8
Harrisburg High: SciTech Campus	325	324	313	315	+2
Marshall	76	75	83	85	+2
Math/Science	387	384	378	367	-11
Melrose	623	648	615	617	+2
Rowland	590	615	560	567	+7
Scott	458	485	496	499	+3
<b>District Total</b>	<b>6187</b>	<b>6389</b>	<b>6245</b>	<b>6248</b>	<b>+3</b>

The number of students enrolled in outplacement has increased from 164 at the beginning of the school year to 227 as of March 2024, with only 7 additional students outplaced this quarter.

Placement	Sept 2023	Sept 2023	Dec 2023	Dec 2023	Mar 2024	Mar 2024
	Reg Ed	Spec Ed	Reg Ed	Spec Ed	Reg Ed	Spec Ed
Catapult Learning Capital Academy	2	34	0	35	1	36
Cougar Paws at Hamilton	25	1	36	0	45	1
Cougar Middle Years at Hamilton	14	1	27	1	29	1
Cougar Achieve at Hamilton	10	1	30	1	20	0
Cougar Excel at Hamilton	57	19	54	20	56	23
Merakey	0	2	0	1	0	1
New Story (Cumberland & Hbg)	0	10	0	10	0	8
Yellow Breeches	0	3	0	5	0	6

Dauphin County Technical School (DCTS) has lost 9 additional students enrolled from Harrisburg High School between December 2023 and March 2024 with a total enrollment of 236 Harrisburg students compared with 257 at the start of the school year. Twenty-one (21) students have left DCTS since the start of the school year. The District remains concerned that students do not feel supported at DCTS which is a major factor in the William Penn Task Force's recommendation to not demolish the abandoned William Penn building, which will be discussed later in this report.

Charter/cyber charter school enrollment has increased by 78 students this quarter. As of March 2024, there are a total of 1,497 students enrolled in charter/cyber charter schools with 681 of those students attending Commonwealth Charter Academy. 98% of students who left Harrisburg School District this quarter enrolled in Commonwealth Charter Academy, costing the District over a million dollars in unbudgeted expenses.

## **Academic Performance**

Regular student attendance is paramount to students' success in the classroom. Student attendance this quarter has remained consistent with most buildings in the 80% range. Cougar Academy, Marshall Math Science Academy, and SciTech exceeded the 90% target this quarter. District attendance as of March 31, 2024 is at 82.81%, which is a very slight increase from December 2023 at 82.47%.

**2023-24 Monthly Percent of Attendance District and School Totals Chart**

<b>Schools/District</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>
Benjamin Franklin	82.7	84.64	82.64
Downey	86.09	88.11	86.93
Foose	85.15	87.67	87.58
Marshall	87.14	85.28	86.45
Melrose	90.06	91.15	89.3
Scott	85.42	86.44	85.38
Camp Curtin	82.55	83.86	84.23
Cougar Academy	89.78	91.52	90.27
Rowland	78.39	80.5	80.03
Math/Science	91.61	91.19	92.64
John Harris	71.98	69.46	70.21
SciTech	91.14	91.2	90.58
<b>District</b>	<b>82.67</b>	<b>83.23</b>	<b>82.81</b>



The Office of Academics is gathering data from the 7C's survey to identify reasons why students miss school. Student Attendance Improvement Plans (SAIPs) continue to be developed for truant students.

The second marking period ended on January 23, 2024. Report cards were issued in early February and elementary parent/teacher conferences were conducted on February 16, 2024.

School Improvement Plan presentations have continued this quarter during public meetings of the School Board/Receiver with the goal of building leaders "owning their data." The following schools' plans were presented by their respective leaders:

- Ben Franklin Elementary School – presented by Principal James Snyder, Assistant Principals Michelle Archie and Matt Kloss – January 23, 2024
- Scott Elementary School – presented by Principal Jason Rawls and Assistant Principal Heather Loy and Rowland Academy – presented by Interim Principal Kevin Deane, Assistant Principals Pia Peterson and Chad Gerard – February 27, 2024
- Foose Elementary School – presented by Principal Will Hicks and Assistant Principal Nicole Snook – March 26, 2024

The PDE statewide team visited with the HBGSD leadership team again on February 21, 2024 to review progress toward school goals for the five (5) CSI buildings. Stronger results were evident in the buildings where the contracted School Improvement Facilitator (SIF) is supporting the team on a biweekly basis.

The Harrisburg School District continues to focus on academic growth and achievement as it implements the academic goals of the Amended Recovery Plan. The reporting focus this quarter is on student growth percentile (SGP) and academic achievement as measured by the District's beginning of year (BOY) and middle of year (MOY) benchmark assessment data. Currently, the District uses Acadience/DIBELS as assessments for kindergarten math. It is important to note that the District has seen a sharp decline in both the math and reading benchmark levels of students who enter kindergarten when compared to pre COVID-19 data. This is evident in the District's math data where at the beginning of the 2018 – 2019 school year, 30% of students entered kindergarten at benchmark and 36% at the beginning of the 2019 – 2020 school year. The data for the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 school years reflects 20%, 26%, and 24%, of students at benchmark, respectively. Acadience/DIBELS data suggests that for the January 2024

MOY assessment kindergarten students have experienced growth. BOY data show 24% of students at benchmark with an increase to 32% at benchmark for the MOY assessment. Additionally, there was a reduction in the percentage of students who were below and significantly below benchmark for the MOY assessment. A similar trend can be seen for the District's reading data where, during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, students entered kindergarten with 24% and 21% at benchmark. PostCOVID-19 numbers show students entering kindergarten at the beginning of the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 school years with 12%, 14%, and 19% percent at benchmark. The data for the 2023-24 school year suggests Harrisburg kindergarten students have demonstrated academic growth in reading as evidenced by the MOY data. At the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, 17% of kindergarten students were at benchmark. This number increased to 25% at benchmark on the MOY Acadience/DIBELS assessments. Additionally, the percentages of students who were below benchmark was reduced from 20% to 19% and from 64% to 57% for students who were significantly below benchmark. It is important to note the District has seen more growth in reading and math at the MOY benchmark than in the pre-COVID years beginning with the 2017 – 2018 school year.

### Acadience/DIBELS Kindergarten 6-year trend

<b>BOY Reading Acadience</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>17-18</b>	25	19	56
<b>18-19</b>	24	18	58
<b>19-20</b>	21	17	61
<b>20-21</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>
<b>21-22</b>	12	12	76
<b>22-23</b>	14	10	76
<b>23-24</b>	17	20	64

<b>MOY Reading Acadience</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>17-18</b>	29	21	50
<b>18-19</b>	24	24	52
<b>19-20</b>	23	25	52
<b>20-21</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>
<b>21-22</b>	18	16	67
<b>22-23</b>	30	23	47
<b>23-24</b>	25	19	57

In grades 1 and 2, the District uses Acadience/DIBELS for benchmark assessments in reading. MOY data for the 2023-24 school year suggests a decrease in reading data for 1<sup>st</sup> grade students. The BOY data shows 25% of students at benchmark, 11% slightly below, and 63% significantly below benchmark. The MOY data is trending in the wrong direction with 16% of students at benchmark, 5% slightly below, and 78%

significantly below. The decrease in the percentages of students who are at benchmark and the increase in students who are significantly below benchmark is concerning. While MOY data for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade did not see a significant decrease in students who were at benchmark or a significant increase for students who were significantly below benchmark, the data was relatively flat where students need to show significant growth if the District is to increase achievement levels.

**Acadience/DIBEL 1<sup>st</sup> grade 6-year trend**

<b>BOY Reading</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>17-18</b>	30	13	57
<b>18-19</b>	27	13	60
<b>19-20</b>	30	12	58
<b>20-21</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>
<b>21-22</b>	4	5	92
<b>22-23</b>	15	8	77
<b>23-24</b>	25	11	63

<b>MOY Reading</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>17-18</b>	20	9	71
<b>18-19</b>	22	8	71
<b>19-20</b>	18	7	75
<b>20-21</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>
<b>21-22</b>	14	8	81
<b>22-23</b>	18	4	78
<b>23-24</b>	16	5	78

### Acadience/DIBELS 2<sup>nd</sup> grade 6-year trend

<b>BOY Reading</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
17-18	35	12	53
18-19	35	9	56
19-20	29	6	65
20-21	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>
21-22	19	7	74
22-23	24	6	70
23-24	26	7	68

<b>MOY Reading</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>17-18</b>	30	9	60
<b>18-19</b>	28	11	61
<b>19-20</b>	23	9	68
<b>20-21</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Covid</b>
<b>21-22</b>	18	7	75
<b>22-23</b>	22	8	69
<b>23-24</b>	24	8	68

In grades 3 through 8, the District uses the STAR Assessment for the purposes of benchmarking students in reading. A review of the data suggests that students at all grade bands have experienced typical academic growth when comparing the BOY and MOY data as measured by student growth percentile (SGP). Students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades have experienced SGP at the lower percentile with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students at a 35 median SGP and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at a 35 median SGP. A summary of reading data

in grades 3 through 8 shows a median SGP of 44. If the District is going to increase the academic achievement level of students, there will need to be a sustained level of high SGP which would mean an SGP between 66 and 99. With an SGP of 66, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade saw the highest level of growth according to the MOY data. Camp Curtin Academy, Melrose, Foose, and Cougar Academy are at the higher end of growth when looking at the whole building. District-wide, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade has seen the most growth when measuring (SGP). Rowland Academy, which is a grades 6-8 building, has seen the least amount of academic growth.

**January 2024 STAR Reading MOY Data**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Below Basic</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Median Growth</b>
<b>3</b>	59	24	15	3	36
<b>4</b>	62	24	11	3	48
<b>5</b>	60	19	17	6	49
<b>6</b>	46	34	14	6	55

<b>7</b>	46	36	15	4	35
<b>8</b>	50	29	17	3	44
<b>Summary</b>	54	27	15	4	44

<b>Low Growth</b>	0-34
<b>Typical Growth</b>	35-65
<b>High Growth</b>	66-99

The STAR Assessment is used for benchmarking 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in math. A review of the data suggests that students in grades 2 – 8 have seen typical SGP as measured by the MOY STAR Assessment. Additionally, 1<sup>st</sup> grade students have seen low SGP with a median score of 30. The summary for 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade math SGP is 41 which is at the low end of typical growth. Like the reading data, to increase the percentages of students who score at the proficient level on benchmark and state assessments, students will need to achieve a sustained level of high SGP.



## January 2024 STAR Math MOY Data

Grade	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Median Growth
1	49	28	17	6	30
2	66	21	10	4	38
3	70	15	9	6	41
4	75	17	5	2	42
5	74	19	5	2	40
6	77	16	6	2	51
7	82	11	6	1	42
8	85	9	4	2	46
<b>Summary</b>	72	17	8	3	41

<b>Low Growth</b>	0-34
<b>Typical Growth</b>	35-65
<b>High Growth</b>	66-99

The results of the winter Keystone Assessments were received this quarter. The 2023-24 Algebra Keystone assessment shows only 3.9% of students proficient and 48.3% basic which are both below the state averages. The percentage of students testing at below basic is 47.1%, which is more than double the state average. While Harrisburg School District students fared better on the 2023-24 school year Keystone Literature exam, they were still behind state averages. 12.9% of students scored proficient and 36.4% of students tested basic. 49.3% of students tested below basic, which is more than double the state average. The Receiver is concerned about the number of students who cannot pass the Keystone Exams to meet the traditional pathway to graduation requirements and must rely on alternative pathways to graduate high school. However, the issue does not begin at the high school level. Students are entering high school years behind academically. This points to curriculum and instruction issues at the elementary and middle school levels where the foundation must be solidly laid.

### 2023-24 Algebra I Winter Keystone Data

	<b>Below Basic</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
<b>District All Testers</b>	47.1%	48.3%	3.9%	0.8%
<b>State All Testers</b>	22.7%	58.9%	14.1%	4.2%

### 2023-24 Literature Winter Keystone Data

	<b>Below Basic</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
<b>District All Testers</b>	49.3%	36.4%	12.9%	1.3%
<b>State All Testers</b>	19.8%	48.5%	30.2%	4.5%

The District will need to continue its focus on early childhood education and allocate resources to kindergarten through 3rd grade to increase academic achievement in the long-term. To that end, Director of Early Childhood Dr. Sabina Grant-Spencer has been establishing relationships with local daycare providers and engaging in discussions with the leaders of the soon-to-open Catherine Hershey School to align with District pre-kindergarten programming. The importance of a solid foundation at the pre-kindergarten level and primary grades cannot be overstated if the achievement gap is going to close before students reach middle and high school levels where deficiencies in reading and mathematics become more pronounced.

Upon return from the winter break, Assistant to the Superintendent Dr. Portia Slaughter and the Office of Academics unveiled a 45-day plan to implement effective February 5, 2024, in preparation for the 2024 PSSA Exams. The goal of the plan was to accelerate curricula in ELA and Mathematics since there are several standards that teachers may not reach prior to the state testing due to pacing of instruction.

Access to quality curriculum is still a deficiency in the Harrisburg School District. Although the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) did some work in this area from 2019 – 2022, there is still much work to be done. Therefore, this quarter the Receiver approved a contract with the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) to conduct a curriculum audit. This first phase of work will soon be underway with the results of the audit expected in June 2024. Subsequent phases of the work will involve training of teachers in building scope and sequence, writing curriculum aligned to state standards, building common assessments, and evaluating resources to be used in implementing the curriculum with fidelity.

Community member Floyd Stokes of the American Literacy Corporation approached the Harrisburg School District about conducting a reading challenge in the month of March to encourage a love of reading in students. Students from all elementary schools participated in the challenge and read hundreds of books over the month. Students who participated received incentives to celebrate their success. Mr. Stokes also organized a “500 Men and Women Reading” event on March 5, 2024, in recognition of Read Across America

Day. Over 150 community members visited schools throughout the District to read books to students, modeling the importance and joy of reading.

New School Board member Autumn Anderson introduced retired Pennsylvania State Police Trooper Matt Harris from Erie, Pennsylvania, to the Receiver and Superintendent. Mr. Harris presented his character education program called *Character Be About It*. This K-12 program brings retired police officers into the schools to teach the curriculum which is intended to reduce bullying and violent behavior. Superintendent Turman is considering the implementation of this program for the 2024-25 school year at the middle school level.

### ***Administration and Governance***

Weekly meetings between the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Receiver, and Chief Recovery Officer were held nearly every Friday morning this quarter. These meetings provide a regular opportunity for

the Administration to debrief the Receiver/CRO on important matters occurring throughout the District, as well as the opportunity to collaborate with and support the top leaders in their respective roles.

The Receiver met with the elected School Board in executive session on January 9 and 23, February 20 and 27, and March 12 and 26, to discuss personnel and student disciplinary matters, legal matters, and labor negotiations issues. The Receiver presided over the Committee of the Whole meetings on January 9, February 20, and March 12, as well as the School Board/Receiver General Business meetings on January 23, February 27, and March 26, 2024.

A key component of the elected School Board's future success upon return to local control will be the ability to effectively govern. To that end, the Receiver met with Erin Eckerd of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) on February 15 to discuss customized board workshops to meet Board training requirements of the Amended Recovery Plan. A subsequent meeting was held on February 22 to plan upcoming Board training sessions for March, April and May 2024. On March 13, the Receiver met with Matt Christman of PSBA to plan the first training session. This workshop entitled "Roles and Responsibilities" was

held on March 19, 2024 from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. Seven (7) of the nine (9) elected Board members participated in this training session led by Matt Christman and Jessica Portz of PSBA.

### ***Operations***

The William Penn Task Force met on January 4 and 18, 2024, for its final meetings. The recommendation to the Receiver was to retain the William Penn building/land and further investigate ways to provide a career and technical education center for the students of Harrisburg School District. Other concepts that garnered support from the Task Force include the construction of a police/fire substation on the William Penn campus to expose students to careers in police/fire/EMT and provide service to the uptown area of the city, and athletic fields to be renovated for middle school sports. The co-facilitators of the Task Force continue to work with the Receiver in developing a white paper on the Task Force's recommendations, coordinating meetings with various agencies, and developing a strategy for a potential project. Ms. Sheila Dow Ford presented the recommendations of the William Penn Task Force at the January 23, 2024, School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting. The Receiver continues to meet with a potential private partner



with an interest in bringing a project to fruition. The potential partner met with the finance subcommittee of the Task Force on February 8, 2024, to present a possible plan that encompasses all the recommendations made by the larger group. A planning meeting occurred with the co-facilitators on February 29, 2024. A meeting was held on March 1, 2024, with the potential developer to further discuss her proposal for the William Penn property with a public/private partner. The concern noted about the proposal is the lack of a minority co-developer, which is especially important to the community members on the finance subcommittee. On March 7, 2024, the William Penn Task Force co-facilitators and Receiver met with representatives from Congressman Scott Perry's, Senator Bob Casey's, and Senator John Fetterman's offices to ask for assistance in obtaining funding for the William Penn project. The representatives appeared interested in the possibility of rehabilitating the building to provide career and technical education and job training for high school students and community members. A member of Harrisburg City Council arranged a meeting between the Receiver and an urban planner on March 25, 2024, to learn about a comprehensive plan for the William Penn campus that was reportedly presented to the elected School Board back in 2018

with no follow-up from the District, even after multiple meetings providing requested information to the Board. The proposal presented appears viable and leads the Receiver to believe that due diligence must be done to properly vet the proposal as it aligns closely with the vision of the William Penn Task Force to restore the school to serve as a career and technology center.

PDE Consultant Ryan Stewart arranged a meeting with Cenergistic and the HBGSD administration on January 5, 2024, to look at potential energy savings in the District. A subsequent meeting was held on February 8, 2024 to review the proposed savings plan. However, the Administration was not interested in moving forward with this provider at this time.

The Administration continued its search for a suitable location for the Administration Building that would also have sufficient space to house the student enrollment center and other administrative groups, such as Special Education, currently housed at Foose Elementary School. Chief Operations Administrator John Reedy found such space at the former Penn State Eastgate Center located at 1010 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street. This quarter the Receiver entered into an agreement of sale to purchase the building at a cost of \$3 million. The

movement of the Administration Building out of the Lincoln Elementary School is a critical piece of the Superintendent's reconfiguration plan. Superintendent Turman presented his final plan for the reconfiguration of District schools at the February 20, 2024 School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting. The net effect of the reconfiguration is that 40% of District students will attend a new school in the 2024-25 school year. There are cost savings for elementary transportation through the reconfiguration to neighborhood K - 5 buildings. The plan also contemplates a three-year phase out of Rowland Academy with incoming 6th graders relocated to Camp Curtin Academy for 2024-25, 7th graders to follow in 2025-26, and 8th graders in 2026-27. Scott Elementary School students and staff will move to Lincoln Elementary School. Scott will then house the alternative education programs managed by SESI. Cougar Academy will relocate from Lincoln to the Hamilton Building. The Administration is working with Public Financial Management (PFM) to develop a 5-year capital improvement plan that includes the projects needed for the reconfiguration as well as other maintenance projects to keep schools operating efficiently.

The Receiver approved the sale of the Wayne Avenue property for \$1.2 million to Susquehanna Township School District (STSD) at the February 27, 2024 School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting. This parcel of land sits in Susquehanna Township and was deeded to Harrisburg School District in the 1970's by the Department of General Services (DGS) to construct the former Harrisburg Intermediate School, which was later demolished two decades later. Susquehanna Township's commissioners, STSD school board leaders and former State Representative Sue Helm met nearly two years ago to request that the Harrisburg School District give up its claim to the property. Since the deed from DGS requires that the land only be used for educational purposes, the Receiver opted to sell the property to STSD at an amount slightly higher than the appraised value. This matter is now with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for their review and approval.

### ***Financial Management***

As a result of the actuarial analysis performed by Conrad Siegel last quarter, which confirmed that the District has been underfunding its health care costs for years, the Administration recommended that the

District terminate its relationship with Gallagher Benefits and enter the Lincoln Benefits Trust. A meeting was held with Lincoln Benefits Trust on February 21, 2024, to discuss the proposed health care rates for 2024-25 and the possibility of transitioning from a PPO to a Qualified High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with a Health Savings Account. In addition to the underfunding, another key area of concern is the projected health care premium costs slated to increase by 15.92%. Since the Amended Recovery Plan stipulates that health care costs cannot exceed 6% per year, and the Harrisburg Education Association (HEA) Collective Bargaining Agreement caps health care increases at 5%, the District has no option than to propose significant plan design changes. A team meeting was held on March 4 with the District solicitor to discuss the concept of replacing the PPO plan with a HDHP, increasing spousal surcharge to \$400 per month, with premium cost share rates set at 12% for Act 93 employees, 11% for HEA, and 4% for AFSCME. Under this scenario, the District initially discussed funding the Health Savings Account at 56% of the deductible which would be \$900 for single, and \$1,800 for family coverage. The District intends to move to Lincoln Benefits Trust effective July 1, 2024, and wants to align its health care year with the fiscal year instead of the calendar

year. The District seeks a Memorandum of Understanding with both HEA and AFSCME. In order to get buy-in to abruptly move to the HDHP, the District ultimately had to offer to fund the Health Savings Account (HSA) at 100% for the first year (July 1, 2024 – June 29, 2025), with the understanding that the District would reduce the contribution to 75% effective June 30, 2025 for the 2025-26 school year. A meeting with HEA, Lincoln Benefits Trust and the PSEA UniServ representative was held on March 18, 2024, to discuss the structural underfunding issue leading to the decision to move to a HDHP and away from the high and low PPO plan offerings of the past. HEA expressed concern about the premium cost share of 12% for Act 93 employees compared with HEA's 11% contribution and the increase in the spousal surcharge from \$150 to \$400 per month effective July 1, 2024. It was recommended that meetings be held as soon as possible for all employees to help them understand why the change is needed and what the monetary impact would be for employees. Dissatisfaction regarding MCIU's work was also mentioned as HEA was under the impression that MCIU had "cleaned up" the issues with human resource items previously; however, the underfunding issue was not determined until recently.

At the January 23, 2024, School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting, the Receiver approved the transfer of \$3,000 from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund which represents the proceeds of the sale of the rowhome located at 1916 Kensington Street (behind Scott Elementary School) which the District recently sold. During the meeting, the Receiver also approved the Treasurer's Reports for the period ending October 31, 2023, in the amount of \$82,371,699.19 and for the period ending November 30, 2023, in the amount of \$65,331,627.87.

Budget transfers in the amount of \$2,586,512.04 were approved for 2023-24. The following budget transfers were also approved effective June 30, 2023, as a result of the finalization of the 2022-23 audit: 1) A transfer of \$6,500,000 from the General Fund (Fund 10) – Unassigned Fund Balance – to the Health Insurance Fund (Fund 60) to cover the health care underfunding; 2) A transfer of \$15,210,000 from the General Fund (Fund 10)– Unassigned Fund Balance – to the Capital Reserve Fund (Fund 22); and 3) A transfer of \$2,053,325 from the General Fund (Fund 10) – Unassigned Fund Balance – to the General Fund (Fund 10) – Assigned Fund Balance for Enrollment Stabilization.

During the February 27, 2024 School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting, the Receiver approved the Treasurer's Report for the period ending December 31, 2023, in the amount of \$73,039,058.42, and 2023-24 budget transfers in the amount of \$413,513.99. The Receiver approved the Treasurer's Report for the period ending January 31, 2024 in the amount of \$63,367,505.76 and budget transfers in the amount of \$1,150,890.25 at the March 26, 2024, School Board/Receiver General Business meeting.

A meeting was held on March 1, 2024, to review progress toward the superintendent's objective performance standard regarding development of policies and procedures to ensure increased MBE/WBE participation within Harrisburg School District. The Receiver met with Biko Taylor of Maxiko Consulting on March 14, 2024, regarding a meeting held earlier that morning with members of the Jewish and Black communities to get a pulse on the acceptance of a race-conscious plan for procurement and the need for a disparity study. The Receiver met with Biko Taylor of Maxiko Consulting and EConsult Solutions on March 27, 2024, to discuss Mr. Taylor's consultant recommendation that a disparity study be conducted in Harrisburg School District. There is a theory that has been presented by some community leaders that



recirculating money within the City of Harrisburg by hiring more businesses owned by persons of color will eventually reduce the tax burden on homeowners.

Standard & Poor's issued a report this quarter with a rating of A- and a stable outlook for the Harrisburg School District. This is excellent news that the District's financial operations are moving in the right direction.

Local auditor BBD, LLP, presented the results of the 2022-23 audit at the January 23, 2024, School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting. There were no findings for the second year in a row, and the District continues to have a significant surplus due to unfilled vacancies. The Chief Financial Officer is recommending transfers of surplus to the Capital Reserve Fund to build reserves for multiple facility needs that have been neglected by the District for decades.

During the March 26, 2024, School Board/Receiver General Business meeting, the Receiver adopted a resolution to initiate nonrenewal proceedings against Premier Arts & Science Charter School and appointed Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Esq., of Fox Rothschild to act as Hearing Officer for the Receiver in said proceedings.

## **Revenue**

The District was awarded the *Stronger Connections* Grant in the amount of \$1,833,360 (2024-2026). Additionally, this quarter the District has been working with its grant writer to apply for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community Change grant which, if awarded, could provide \$10 – 20 million in funds for the District to impact the William Penn facility.

## **Workforce**

This quarter the District lost two quality administrators to other positions. Principal James Snyder at Ben Franklin Elementary School and Director of Extended Learning Dr. Danielle Curzi resigned to accept leadership roles with other entities. Both administrators claim that the lack of support from the central office leadership and poor top-down communication contributed to their decisions to depart. This is an area that must be given attention to attract and retain quality administrators to the Harrisburg School District.

The District began advertising in January for the principal of the newly renovated Steele Elementary School which is scheduled to open in the fall. Also, because of the analysis performed by 425 Consulting, the Administration recommended an additional position to the Office of Human Resources. The Administration determined that a Labor Relations Specialist position is needed to address the continuous flow of issues that are brought to the Office of Human Resources by the bargaining units. While the leadership of the Harrisburg Education Association (HEA) has commented to the Receiver that "things have improved a little," there are still some concerns as evidenced by the labor/management meet and discuss monthly agendas. HEA grievance #1-23-24 did proceed to arbitration this quarter but a settlement was reached with the Association before the hearing began. The District settled two outstanding workers' compensation claims this quarter. AFSCME employees continue to express concerns on many issues that impact their membership.

There were several concerning personnel issues that occurred this quarter: 1) Two distinct situations occurring outside of school involving two Act 93 administrators that resulted in both individuals being

placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of investigations; and 2) A physical altercation between a teacher and a safety monitor that occurred in the presence of students in the classroom during the school day which also resulted in both employees being placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of an investigation. The first incident brought to light procedural deficiencies in the Office of Human Resources in obtaining required Act 168 documents before hiring. At the request of the Receiver, an independent investigator was contracted to investigate several concerns and was able to effectuate the receipt of the required paperwork; however, the issue points to the fact that the Office of Human Resources lacks trained, skilled personnel who fully understand their responsibilities. The Receiver has charged the Superintendent with taking appropriate action to address these concerns. The Office of Human Resources is a particularly important department to any school district and must be able to respond in a timely manner to concerns of employees, handle the flow of required paperwork, and ensure that proper procedures and policies are followed to prevent problems for the District.

Overtime costs as of March 31, 2024, are \$180,472.27. The District continues to monitor overtime expenses

and is tracking \$140,479.06 less than this same period in 2023:

Positions	Q1 FY24	Q2 FY24	Q3 FY24		Q1 FY23	Q2 FY23	Q3 FY23
Secretary/Clerical	\$ 20,771.92	\$ 17,021.08	\$ 15,308.43		\$ 26,170.62	\$ 33,781.01	\$ 20,274.70
Grounds Services OT	\$ 413.21	\$ 31.88	\$ 335.76		\$ 608.46	\$ 721.90	\$ 274.34
Warehouse/Maintenance	\$ 355.75	\$ 235.41	\$ 473.30		\$ 411.28	\$ 658.65	\$ 935.98
Custodial/Safety/Food Service	\$ 16,007.09	\$ 39,300.29	\$ 40,574.26		\$ 94,584.92	\$ 47,585.55	\$ 51,083.68
Para/Office/FES	\$ 5,922.87	\$ 12,972.81	\$ 10,748.21		\$ 10,426.43	\$ 18,314.38	\$ 15,119.43
	<b>\$ 43,470.84</b>	<b>\$ 69,561.47</b>	<b>\$ 67,439.96</b>		<b>\$ 132,201.71</b>	<b>\$ 101,061.49</b>	<b>\$ 87,688.13</b>

All staff positions are being scrutinized as the Administration prepares the 2024-25 budget. The

Receiver is concerned that the additional administrative positions requested for 2023-24 have not yielded

substantial gains in academic achievement. Priorities must shift to the classroom before increasing

administrative staff in the 2024-25 budget.

Superintendent Turman, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marisol Craig and the Receiver attended a meeting at Penn State Harrisburg on March 1, 2024, to discuss with Interim Chancellor Dr. Callejo-Perez a proposal for a “fast track” teaching certification program pilot within Harrisburg School District. The program would allow high-achieving high school students to take dual enrollment courses in their junior/senior year at HACC and then complete their Bachelor of Elementary Education degree in less than four years. The District needs to increase its pipeline of “grow your own” teachers since fewer certifications are being issued in recent years. The Receiver hosted a follow-up meeting between two Penn State Harrisburg professors and Ms. Gina Colarossi from PDE on March 15, 2024, to request possible PDE support/funding for the Penn State fast track program. The possibility of “Attract, Prepare and Retain” grant funds was discussed as a means of funding this program.

Harrisburg School District

Act 141 Advisory Committee Meeting

January 11, 2024  
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

***In Attendance:***

***Committee Members:*** Darnise Anderson, Melanie Cook, Dr. Marisol Craig, Laura Harding, Beth Light, Susan Roth, Eugene Spells, Dr. Marcia Stokes, Dr. Lori Suski, Jim Thompson, Doug Thompson Leader, Eric Turman, Dr. Travis Waters, Dr. Tamara Willis

***Staff:*** Adam Nornhold

- Dr. Waters welcomed members back and wished the group a happy new year.
- Dr. Waters welcomed Susan Roth, Principal/CEO of Sylvan Heights Science Charter School, who has been appointed by the CAIU as the replacement for Tim Wendling on the Act 141 Advisory Committee. Ms. Roth introduced herself to the group.
- Dr. Suski announced that the proposed plan amendment which had been submitted to the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas in July 2023 was recently approved by the judge.
- Dr. Waters introduced the four new academic goals that were recently approved and said that the committee would be discussing one goal per month and providing feedback on the action steps/metrics presented.
- Dr. Waters began by sharing the action steps for Goal #2 around early childhood (see attachment). The committee offered the following comments/suggestions:

- *Partner with other agencies and track progress toward early childhood goals;*
- *Marketing of Pre-K and K-5 since neither is compulsory in Pennsylvania;*
- *Desire to seek additional funding for more Pre-K classrooms as there is a waiting list for students to attend;*
- *PA Stars is a good document to download for quality Pre-K and K-5 information;*
- *A “Jump Start” program for K-5 would be beneficial;*
- *Seek representatives to attend Dauphin County Poverty Forum and Catherine Hershey meetings to get further ideas;*
- *Create materials for parents to use at home with their children (ex: flip charts);*
- *Develop PK-2 assessment maps;*
- *Look at student benchmark data for middle of the year (MOY);*
- *Offer quality professional development to Pre-K teachers and time to plan with a facilitator on teaching strategies that are developmentally appropriate;*
- *Improve instruction so that parents do not pull their children out of HBGSD and enroll them in cyber charter schools;*
- *Post curriculum on the District website so parents can see what their children are learning;*
- *Provide parents resources through SAS website and other reputable sites;*
- *Expose students to grade-level curriculum and fill in learning gaps where needed;*



- *Scaffold instruction for students who are below grade-level.*
- Dr. Waters thanked the group for their input and commented that the hour went by quickly. Dr. Suski suggested that Dr. Waters provide access to next month's goal ahead of time so that the committee can come prepared with feedback to expedite discussion.
- Dr. Waters reminded the committee of the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
- The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Harrisburg School District

Act 141 Advisory Committee Meeting

February 8, 2024  
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

***In Attendance:***

***Committee Members:*** Darnise Anderson, Melanie Cook, Dr. Marisol Craig, Laura Harding, Beth Light, Susan Roth, Eugene Spells, Dr. Marcia Stokes, Dr. Lori Suski, Jim Thompson, Doug Thompson Leader, Eric Turman, Dr. Travis Waters, Dr. Tamara Willis

***Staff:*** Adam Nornhold

- Dr. Waters welcomed members back and wished the group a happy new year.
- Dr. Waters welcomed Susan Roth, Principal/CEO of Sylvan Heights Science Charter School, who has been appointed by the CAIU as the replacement for Tim Wendling on the Act 141 Advisory Committee. Ms. Roth introduced herself to the group.
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- *Seek representatives to attend Dauphin County Poverty Forum and Catherine Hershey meetings to get further ideas;*
- *Create materials for parents to use at home with their children (ex: flip charts);*
- *Develop PK-2 assessment maps;*
- *Look at student benchmark data for middle of the year (MOY);*
- *Offer quality professional development to Pre-K teachers and time to plan with a facilitator on teaching strategies that are developmentally appropriate;*
- *Improve instruction so that parents do not pull their children out of HBGSD and enroll them in cyber charter schools;*
- *Post curriculum on the District website so parents can see what their children are learning;*
- *Provide parents resources through SAS website and other reputable sites;*
- *Expose students to grade-level curriculum and fill in learning gaps where needed;*

- *Scaffold instruction for students who are below grade-level.*
- Dr. Waters thanked the group for their input and commented that the hour went by quickly. Dr. Suski suggested that Dr. Waters provide access to next month's goal ahead of time so that the committee can come prepared with feedback to expedite discussion.
- Dr. Waters reminded the committee of the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
- The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Harrisburg School District

Act 141 Advisory Committee Meeting

March 14, 2024  
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

***In Attendance:***

***Committee Members:*** Dr. Sieta Achampong, Melanie Cook, Laura Harding, Michele Rolko, Susan Roth, Dr. Andria Saia, Dr. Marcia Stokes, Dr. Lori Suski, Jim Thompson, Doug Thompson Leader, Eric Turman

***Staff:*** Adam Nornhold

- Dr. Suski welcomed everyone and shared that Dr. Waters was unable to be in attendance.
- Dr. Suski distributed minutes from the February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting and suggested that tonight’s meeting pick up where the group left off in the discussion of Goal #1.
- **Goal #1** – *Establish comprehensive systems and processes to improve student achievement at all grade levels, including but not limited to using data-driven decision making, implementing standardized instructional practices across the District, using a standards-aligned curriculum, and providing safe and welcoming building climates that support and promote student learning.*
  - *Strategy 1 – Complete a curriculum audit.*
    - *Mr. Turman and Dr. Suski reviewed the scope of work and timeline for Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) who was recently contracted to perform the curriculum audit.*

- *Strategy 2 – Implement a standards-aligned curriculum.*
  - *Mr. Turman explained that recent feedback obtained from his listening sessions with teachers determined a need for more support for lesson planning. Therefore, next year, during the early release Wednesdays, teachers will meet by grade levels across the District to engage in common lesson planning development.*
  - *Mr. Thompson Leader suggested that a document repository be established (perhaps in Microsoft Teams) for teachers to store lesson plans. With the transience in the District, this would be a valuable resource for new and/or emergency-certified teachers. He also recommended an overlay to capture congruence (or incongruence) in lesson planning and questioned how to approach those who do not demonstrate congruence.*
  - *Ms. Rolko stated that principals were “on their own island” in the past and “hung out to dry” on occasion. Curriculum that was written was often “trashed.”*
  - *Ms. Cook said that teachers take their knowledge with them when they leave the District, and meeting regularly will help support teachers.*
  - *Mr. Thompson Leader asked if the District has Teams groups and/or uses SharePoint.*
  - *Ms. Harding recommended that this could allow teachers to look at the gaps between years.*
  - *Mr. Thompson Leader expressed concern about the loss of time on professional development days due to travel between schools. Mr. Turman suggested alternating every other week to reduce travel.*
  - *Ms. Rolko recommended that training in Teams be conducted since many teachers are unfamiliar with that application.*
- *Strategy 3 – Tier I Instructional Model*
  - *Dr. Suski defined the acronym G.L.E.A.M. as Grade Level Engaging Affirming and Meaningful Instruction.*

- *Mr. Turman shared that many teachers view the materials as the curriculum and are not necessarily using the resources that have been adopted by the District. He explained the need to scaffold up grade level content to ensure that students are exposed to it prior to state testing.*
    - *Dr. Saia asked if teachers can execute with the provided resources. “Do they know what to do?” Mr. Turman explained that a survey of needed support yielded only 30 responses across the District. Dr. Saia said it is important to identify who is good at using certain materials and having them serve as a resource for teachers. Dr. Achampong stated that it is a trust issue as many teachers don’t want to “look stupid.” Ms. Harding suggested a retreat to build trust. Dr. Saia emphasized the importance of training instructional coaches. Mr. Turman shared that Dr. Slaughter has four days planned for professional development and that the coaches will be deployed to buildings next year via the Office of Academics instead of by the building leaders. Mr. Turman also discussed the AIMS Institute’s work on training regarding the Science of Reading.*
  - *Strategy 4 – Use of Educator Effectiveness to Ground Instructional Leadership*
    - *Dr. Saia spoke about Charlotte Danielson’s framework and the importance of providing stability for and intense support for teachers’ progress.*
    - *Mr. Turman noted that there are far less resignations now than there were two years ago and stressed the importance of marketing early. Ms. Rolko said that she has had zero coverages this year. Dr. Stokes said that our substitute teacher fill rate is in the 90% range this year.*
    - *Mr. Turman shared information on the “grow your own” teacher program that the District is pursuing for next year, and the Penn State Harrisburg Fast Track program that should yield 30 – 45 new teachers from the Harrisburg SD in the next 3 – 5 years. Dr. Saia indicated that there are 10 paraprofessionals in the CAIU program to become certified teachers.*
    - *Ms. Cook said that many paraprofessionals are working for agencies and may not receive emails from the District’s Office of HR. She suggested that the District identify the agencies with whom the District contracts to see if their employers are willing to fund the program. Ms. Cook also suggested that the District hire high*

*school students to serve as paraprofessionals through a work study program. Dr. Suski said that students could be paid minimum wage.*

- *Mr. Thompson Leader discussed the importance of exposing students to becoming teachers using an apprenticeship model. Dr. Saia said that Temple University has an early childhood program where nine (9) credits in early childhood education can be taken free of charge. She also recommended [ECEPDO.org](https://www.ecepdo.org) through Shippensburg University.*
  - *Ms. Cook asked that this information be placed on the District website. Ms. Harding recommended that athletic training programs also be advertised, such as LVC and Central Penn College. Ms. Cook said that Mississippi is doing this, and It is a great stepping stone, but PDE is part of the problem in terms of creating barriers to certification. Ms. Cook asked what the next steps would be and explained why actionable steps are needed. One example is a ticker tape across the website. Mr. Nornhold shared that the current website does not have that capability, but the new website will be next summer. Dr. Suski will follow up with Ms. Keys on adding these areas to the website now.*
  - *Ms. Harding asked if a journalism class/club is in existence at the high school. Students should be producing a District newsletter. Dr. Suski mentioned The Burg as a great partner for a future student internship opportunity. Someone suggested that students interview Mr. Turman as part of a podcast.*
- Dr. Suski noted that the group was out of time but had great dialogue around the first four strategies of Goal #1. She would recommend to Dr. Waters that the next meeting focus on Strategies # 5- 8.
  - Dr. Suski also reminded the group of the [Google doc](#) that Dr. Waters developed to receive feedback/input on strategies of the new goals and asked that they feel free to add their thoughts outside of the meeting, if they desire.
  - Dr. Suski reminded the committee of the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
  - The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.