Strategic Plan Year 4 (2024-2025)

Mission

Inspiring a love of learning in all students so they develop as critical thinkers and innovative creators who contribute to the world with integrity and purpose beyond themselves.

Vision

Preparing all students today to thrive in a changing world tomorrow.

Core Values

Wellness--Creating balanced learning environments that are physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe and healthy.

Integrity--Acting honestly and ethically with shared accountability.

Excellence--Delivering the highest quality education for each student to reach their individual potential.

Equity--Advocating for and advancing opportunities and outcomes for all.

Innovation--Leading with creativity and ingenuity through disciplined problem solving.

Collaboration--Working openly, productively, and interdependently toward common goals.

Diversity and Inclusion--Creating a community that welcomes and embraces the full range of human differences.

Respect and Civility--Acting with consideration for the feelings, thoughts, experiences and rights of others.

Goal Area 1: Enhancing teaching and learning.

Key Performance Indicators: *Grades 3, 5, 8, 11, and 12 standardized assessment data (SBA, NGSS, SAT, AP, Seal of Biliteracy and District Accountability Index) graduation rates- including analysis of sub group growth performance*

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
1A: Develop a shared vision of teaching and learning	*Implement revised and approved Educator and Evaluator Support and Growth Plan providing calibrated and high quality feedback*	*Years 4 (2024-2025)*	*Formal written feedback in TEPL with completed goal processes for all certified staff*
	Develop a shared understanding of play-based learning and best practices for scheduling, instruction and assessment	*Years 4 (2024-2025)*	*Professional Learning Agendas, PLC meeting minutes, Open House Events, Educator Evaluations and feedback*
	Provide on-going communication to the Board and community about teaching and learning	*Years 4 (2024-2025)*	*Programmatic updates at Curriculum Committee meetings reflecting District mission, vision, and core values*
	Establish consistent, systemic opportunities through structured PLCs K-5 to calibrate and strengthen our District vision for high quality teaching and learning	*Years 4 - 5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Uniform PLC process and procedures utilizing data to plan target instruction; District Elementary Grade Level Leader Meetings to build capacity in leading the work*
	Improving Tier 1 Core instruction for all students by designing instruction to address individual student learning needs	*Years 4 - 5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Progress monitoring of all students including MTSS (SRBI) data; IEP Goals, Objectives*
	PDEC to design and facilitate ELP-12 professional learning plan incorporating Teaching and Learning Principles focusing on high leverage instructional strategies	*Years 4 - 5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Implementation and representation of teaching and learning principles that impact teacher growth and student learning outcomes*

1B: Revise and/or create curricula that are designed to responsively represent diverse perspectives as well as meet individual learning needs	Implement the planned literacy pilot and programmatic resources based upon Core Review Team recommendations for FY26 Budget decision making	Year 4 (2024-2025)	Literacy data, feedback from Core Review Team to inform recommendation to the Board for purchase of K-3 Literacy resources in the FY26 Budget
	Revise and expand our systemic K-Grade 8 SRBI protocols toward a MTSS framework ensuring growth for all learners	Year 4 (2024-2025)	Meeting schedules and agendas; revised MTSS plan
	Design units of study with differentiated instructional plans that attend to the needs of all learners	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Written curriculum and supporting instructional materials that emphasize diverse perspectives, differentiation, reflect elements of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and multiple pathways to success
	Write and revise curricula according to the District PK-12 Curriculum Development Cycle and timeline; Embed units in Eduplanet21 develop and transfer all (PK-12) units of study in Eduplanet21 platform by FY26	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Development and publication of units to Eduplanet21 platform; progress updates to the Board
	Engage staff in professional learning with a focus on standards aligned, developmentally appropriate play-based learning experiences that reflect the requirements outlined in PA 23-159, PA 23-101; Develop 3 curriculum based scenarios for implementation	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Staff professional learning agendas and feedback; Play-based learning strategies implemented; Curricula for 3 scenarios embedded in EduPlanet21
	Continue to revise curricula to develop assured experiences PK-12 to assess students' growth as measured in alignment with content and practice standards and the Vision of the Graduate competencies; Develop portfolio options tied to the Vision of the Graduate for organizing and demonstrating student achievement and growth	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Curricula embedded into EduPlanet21; Portfolio options explored and shared with the BOE Curriculum Committee

1C: Align job-embedded professional learning (JEPL) opportunities to support growth and development in identified areas	Engage PDEC in efforts to provide JEPL aligned to teacher, school and District goals; Develop opportunities for staff to design and facilitate professional learning (eg. Orientation, EdCamp); Continued implementation of Instructional Rounds; Create opportunities for teacher leadership	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Professional Learning Catalog Professional Learning Feedback Time for collaboration Structures for collaboration and analysis of student work Committee Meeting Agendas/Minutes

Goal Area 2: Fostering a culture that promotes wellness, diversity, and inclusion.

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
2A: Create a caring school climate that promotes wellness	District elementary committee to finalize elementary updated progress report	Year 4 (2024-2025)	Committee findings and recommendations
	Outline a wellness program for students and staff, implement DistrIct-wide	Year 4 (2024-2025)	District and school leaders using collected data and information to leverage assets and enhance identified areas of support; comprehensive document of wellness internal and external (EAP, insurance offerings)
	Embed proactive and responsive strategies and provide timely intervention for student behaviors	Year 4 (2024-2025)	A District-wide leadership team in Restorative Practices; a revised Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework
	Implement a PK-8 Personal Device Guidelines policy; investigate best practices for students use of personal devices beyond instructional use at the high school level	Year 4 (2024-2025)	Provide a recommendation regarding Personal Device use in grades 9-12; Survey to gather stakeholder feedback regarding the guidelines as implemented at the elementary and middle school levels
	Develop and implement an annual school climate plan for students, staff, and families based on results from a climate survey	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	School Climate survey results with aligned, responsive action steps reflected in each school's climate improvement plan; Focus group data

2B: Engage stakeholders in the practice of embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion	Continue to liaison with community groups, parent/teacher organizations, mental health task force, Thriving Youth, etc.	Year 4 (2024-2025)	Meeting participation; feedback from Director of Mental Health; Thriving Youth Survey results
	School Climate Committees to develop action steps for parent partnership; District-wide climate data presented to the BOE	Year 4 (2024-2025)	School Climate Committee agendas and meeting minutes; BOE presentation.; District Data
	Implement prioritized considerations of DEI Team Report	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Embedded in the strategic plan
	Teachers of the Gifted to receive training in twice exceptional and multilingual learner supports (MLL) to ensure equitable identification of gifted learners and access to programming	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Professional learning opportunities and feedback
	Develop a professional learning plan for implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) addressing curriculum design, instructional strategies and assessment practice; Implementation year FY26	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Professional learning opportunities, feedback and revised curricula documents, instructional resources reflecting tenets of UDL
	Implement mandated implicit bias training for all participants in District hiring process	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Records of staff participation

Goal Area 3: Developing a balanced definition of student success through the Vision of the Graduate.

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
3A: Ensure District values are operationalized across all schools	*Align school-based practices with the values of the Vision of the Graduate (VoG) to ensure academic excellence, and the development of skills and disposition for success beyond the classroom*	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Student achievement data; student reflection and goal setting*
	Represent competencies of the Vision of the Graduate within District policies and practices, including discipline procedures, handbooks, restorative practices, and instruction	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*VoG competencies demonstrated in daily routines and artifacts such as curriculum documents, handbooks, and discipline procedures*
	Survey students and conducts focus group to determine if the Vision of the Graduate values are effectively embedded within schools	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Survey data and feedback from focus group*
3B: Develop systems to measure, inform, and enhance implementation of the Vision of the Graduate	*Determine how the District will measure, use, store, and analyze data in order to inform the work of the Vision of the Graduate*	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Documentation of proposed new system; Technology resource reflected in FY27 Budget*
	Provide opportunities for student and alumni reflection and feedback to inform the Vision of the Graduate implementation process	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Data on students' levels of post graduate preparedness*

3C: Audit and adjust District curriculum, school programming, and student life to ensure focus on service, citizenship, and post-secondary opportunities	Continue to develop and revise curricula and co curricular experiences to include opportunities for students to embody the values of the Vision of the Graduate such as student service and citizenship	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Implemented curriculum; documentation of co curricular opportunities and student engagement that include internship, capstone projects, and service learning opportunities
	Design Transition Programs and community opportunities based on student need	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Pathway Mapping and Planning for students; Annual review and monitoring of student progress on transition goals; Transition Programs Steering Committee review and proposal for the 2025-2026 fiscal year

Goal Area 4: Expanding the professional capacity of staff.

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
4A: Explore ways to improve the District's professional learning culture and practices	*Foster an environment of teacher engagement, wellness and continuous learning and growth to support teacher retention in Darien Public Schools*	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Retention rates; Survey Data; Exit interview data; Attendance data*
	Increase opportunities for teacher voice in professional learning	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*PDEC Sub-Committee planning; Professional Development Survey Results; Teacher led professional development*
	Develop and pilot professional learning opportunities specifically designed to grow staff capacity in District and promote internal potential for career advancement	Years 4-5 *(2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Implement Aspiring Leader Academy; Explore systemic mentor program for new to Darien and new to the profession educators; Agreements with DAA and DEA to provide teacher and administrative mentorships*

4B: Ensure a professional learning system that promotes continuous growth and support	*Create conditions for staff to pursue professional learning opportunities internally and externally that are aligned to District and individual goals*	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Professional Learning Feedback*
	Ensure regular opportunities for teachers to receive high quality and responsive feedback from building administration and discipline specific feedback from District department chairs regarding curriculum implementation and teaching practice to promote educator effectiveness toward the District's identified teaching learning principles	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Regular and timely feedback monitored and reviewed by union and administration*
	Expand opportunities to calibrate instructional practices among administrative staff in order to provide common instructional language and consistent feedback to teachers.	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Records of calibration training; TEPL records; structured time for leadership to calibrate a lens for teaching and learning and providing high quality actionable feedback*
	Consider thoughtful use of District Calendar that builds in consistent professional learning time between general education, special education and related service providers for implementation in FY 26	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Staffing that supports teacher participation (ie sub coverage); teacher feedback on learning opportunities; monitor and analyze time allocated for professional learning during the 2024-2025 school year for certified staff*

4C: Attract and retain diverse educators.	Participate in State and RESC workshops and programs in order to develop strategies that will support District workforce diversification; Monitor the effectiveness of the District's recruitment and retention plan and identify potential barriers to employment of minority staff	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Workforce diversity data and trends
	Enhance development of culture that supports teacher retention, workforce diversity, and cultural awareness	Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)	Exit interview data

Goal Area 5: Developing and enhancing systems to promote efficiency, coherence, and communication.

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
5A: Establish effective and open lines of communication among all stakeholders.	*Develop Communications Plan*	*Year 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Implementing strategies from communications plan; revised DPS website with end user data regarding appeal and functionality; coherent pages/templates within the website across departments*
	Redesign of a District website with an interface that appeals to end users of the varied stakeholder groups and improves functionality	*Year 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Reflected in recommendation and FY26 Budget Planning*
5B: Align District's guiding documents and communications with its mission, vision, and core values to foster coherence.	*Analyze PreK-12 student performance reports (progress reports, grades, and grade reporting) for the purpose of aligning them to District guiding documents*	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Revised and aligned progress reports and grade reporting practices*
	Develop and revise policies in alignment with District Guiding Documents	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Revised and aligned policies*

Goal Area 6: Improving school facilities for student safety and access to learning.

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
Goal 6: Ensure that the configuration and condition of the District's physical facilities provide secure and supportive environments for teaching and learning.	*Identify the long term capital needs to support teaching and learning*	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Implement a plan to monitor and maintain healthy and safe school buildings*
	Identify improvements for best practices in Emergency and Safety Planning along with necessary resources	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Adhering to state guidelines and testing for new IAQ mandate; Obtain CALEA Campus Security Accreditation; Annual report to the BOE on school security*
	Oversee construction for Hindley, Holmes, and Royle Elementary Schools	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Building Committee participation; regular communications to Board & community*
	Conduct architectural study to evaluate Tokeneke, Middlesex Middle School and Darien High School facilities	*Year 5 (2025-2026)*	*Recommendation on funding in FY26 budget*

Goal Area 7: Improving technology to support teaching and learning.

Strategy	Action	Timeline	Evidence
Goal 7A: Ensure strategic utilization of technology to enrich, support, and inspire teaching and learning.	*Review and update as needed District protocols for software implementation and evaluation*	*Year 4 (2024-2025)*	*Analysis of instructional technology software usage rates and effectiveness; Exemplars of student learning enabled by technology*
	Create conditions and learning opportunities for an innovative STEM program of study along with authentic STEM learning experiences	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Revised elementary science curriculum; Secondary course offerings and enrollment; facilities enhanced for STEM learning opportunities*
	Create a vertically aligned, standards-based library media studies (LMS) ELP-Grade 5 curriculum	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Developed and Implemented curriculum*
	Create conditions to support the utilization of technological innovations to advance teaching and learning experiences	*Year 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Communications to stakeholder groups; Continued professional learning and exploration technological resources; Lessons embedded within the curricula to support responsible and appropriate use of this technology; strengthened data metrics warehouse to inform instructional decision making and technology use*
	Consider implementing a new student information management system in place of Aspen	*Year 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Funding in the FY26 budget for the possible replacement of student information system (replacing ASPEN with PowerSchool)*

Goal 7B: Establish, and manage a secure, reliable, and dynamic technology system for effective and efficient District operations.	*Develop and maintain an accessible database systems (inventory, student management systems, reporting, equipment, teaching and learning)*	*Year 4 (2024-2025)*	*Evaluation of current systems and recommendations and/or implementation of new systems*
	Establish infrastructure — including network connections, wireless access, necessary hardware and software, and user support — that provides interoperability, mobility, filtering, monitoring, security, and scalability to allow for increased usage by all stakeholders	*Years 4-5 (2024-2025) (2025-2026)*	*Usage reports and surveys*

Glossary of Terms Strategic Plan Year 4

ACT - American College Test

AP - Advanced Placement

BOE - Board of Education

BOF - Board of Finance

BOS - Board of Supervisors

CALEA - Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies

CDSP - Council of Darien School Parents

DAA - Darien Administrators' Association

DEA - Darien Education Association

DEI - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

EAP - Employee Assistance Program

ESY - Extended School Year

F&B - Finance & Budget

FERPA- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

FOIA - Freedom of Information Act

IEP - Individualized Education Plan

JEPL - Job-embedded Professional Learning

LMS - Library Media Studies

LMS - Learning Management System (Technology Department)

MLL - Multilingual Learner

MTSS - Multi-Tiered System of Supports

NEASC - New England Association of Schools and Colleges

NGSS - Next Generation Science Standards

PDEC - Professional Development and Evaluation Committee

PLC - Professional Learning Community

RESC - Regional Educational Service Centers

RTM-ED - Representative Town Meeting- Education

RTM-F&B - Representative Town Meeting- Finance & Budget

SAT - Student Assistance Team

SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test

SBAC - Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

SEPAC - Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

SRBI - Scientific Research Based Interventions

STEM - Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

TEPL - Teacher Evaluation and Professional Learning

UbD - Understanding by Design

UDL - Universal Design for Learning

VoG - Vision of the Graduate