

---

# Entry Plan Overview

**Dr. Matthew J. Block**  
**Superintendent of Schools**  
**March 2025**



---

The background features a large, faded circular seal of the Ashley School District. The seal contains the text "ASHLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT" around the perimeter and a central emblem with a book and a torch.

# THE ENTRY EXPERIENCE

---



# PURPOSE OF ENTRY PLAN PROCESS

1. Gain a thorough understanding of the operations and culture of the school district and the community we serve.
2. Reflect on current policies and practices, with an eye toward setting strategic priorities and informed goals for future initiatives.
3. Connect to the community and set the standard that stakeholders will be listened to and learned from.



# 10 MONTHS OF INFORMATION GATHERING

**As comprehensive as possible, including:**

Meetings with stakeholder groups

Review of documents

Review of data from multiple sources

Small group conversations

Multiple events, classroom observations, meetings, and data reviews

A lot of listening

Reflection and synthesis

***This work is NEVER done but over time shifts more to action and decisions.***



# Agenda

- ✓ **Capture highlights**
- ✓ **Discuss themes that emerged**
- ✓ **Provide a sense of where we are**

---

The background features a large, faded circular seal of the Ashley School District. The seal contains the text "ASHLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT" around the perimeter and a central emblem with a shield and a caduceus-like staff.

# OVERARCHING TAKEAWAYS

---

# STRENGTHS

**Talented and spirited students**

**Here to learn and show it daily**

**Community**

**Well supported by the community**

**Dedicated Staff**

**Great things are happening in many classrooms**

**Opportunities for staff leadership**

**Curriculum, Technology Integration, Committees, Analysis**

**High Expectations**

**100% graduation rate**

**Opportunities and programs**

**Well beyond the size of the district**

# STRENGTHS

**Counseling  
Support**

**Access to counselors and  
support staff**

**Course Choice**

**Pathways to graduation**

**Libraries/Media  
Centers**

**Active centers of learning**

**Security**

**Preparedness, training, drills, and  
policies**

**Technology  
integration**

**One-to-one devices, Smart  
Boards, tools and training**

**Sports,  
Competitive  
Teams**

**Successful athletic teams,  
interscholastic sports**

---



# ACTION ITEMS

**Academic  
Consistency**

**Instruction, grading, homework,  
and other academic functions**

**Sequencing of  
content K-12**

**Connect content areas for  
interdisciplinary learning  
experiences**

**School-to-School  
Transitions**

**Particularly from grades 4 to 5**

**More In-class  
Individualized  
Instruction**

**Less reliance on other time for  
extra help**

**District Rankings**

**Would like to see these  
increase**

# ACTION ITEMS

**Support Students  
Where They Are**

**Reduce the need for 504 plans  
and classification**

**Student Joy: School  
and Learning**

**Create connection, belonging  
and ownership - student voice**

**More Accessible  
Information**

**Particularly curriculum and  
grades. Open gradebook.**

**Improve Sports  
and Activities**

**Provide the best experiences  
for students**

**Business  
Courses**

**Provide more course offerings  
in the field of business**

---

# ACTION ITEMS

**Slow Pace of  
School Day**

**Particularly at AHS, include time  
for support, individualization,  
mental wellness**

**Improve  
Organizational  
Systems and  
Processes**

**Automation and efficiency;  
particularly in human  
resources**

**Addressing  
Facilities Issues**

**Ensuring success with current  
major facilities updates and  
addressing other issues**

---

---

The background features a large, faint, circular seal of the Ashley School District. The seal contains the text "ASHLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT" around the perimeter and a central emblem with a book and a torch.

# INTERESTING DATA

---



# AP COURSES

## TAKEAWAY

Nearly half of our eligible students (11th and 12th grade) do not take even one AP (Advanced Placement) course. The data suggests our AP program provides excellent preparation for students to achieve at the highest levels on the exams (14/20 with 90% or better passing rates).

## ACTIONS

Expand AP options, incentivize students to take courses and exams, encourage more students to challenge themselves at the highest level and explore interests. Make AP more accessible and send the message that success in AP is attainable.



# MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

## TAKEAWAY

Students being classified (provided with official IEPs) has risen significantly over past three years; almost 50 student increase since the 2022-23 school year. This often takes them out of the general education environment and places them in the special education environment. We want students to get the supports if special education is required and adhere to the principle that students will thrive in the least restrictive and most rigorous environment possible.

## ACTIONS

Providing guidance and professional development to our entire educational team to ensure all teachers are able to deliver interventions and accommodations for students before the student is referred for classification.

Commit to our foundational math and literacy programs at the primary level.

Continue to implement evidenced-based instructional methodologies.



# PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE

## TAKEAWAY

Ninety-nine percent of our students are going directly into a post-secondary education setting immediately after graduation. Therefore, we can hone in our efforts to prepare them for their experiences after Ardsley.

## ACTIONS

Need to focus on providing courses and experiences that are aligned with expectations of desirable colleges and universities. Ensure our counselors have the tools they need to help our students access a broad range of options in higher education.



# U.S. News Ranking

High School	NY State Ranking	Overall Score	AP Participation Rate (Took at least one AP Exam)	Passed (at least one AP exam)	College Readiness (Proportion of seniors that passed at least one exam) (30% of score)	College Readiness (Proportion of seniors with qualifying AP Scores in multiple content areas) / Rank out of 100. (10% of score)	State Assessment (RANK) (20% of score)	State Assessment Performance of Underserved Students (RANK) (20% of score)	4 Year - Grad Rate Percent / Rank (10% of score)
Ardsley	77	96.04	66%	56%	61.8 / 81st	44th	85th	412th	98% - 123
Irvington	29	98.63	86%	31%	79.9 / 29th	11th	43rd	165th	92% - 533
Hastings	40	98.34	81%	28%	67.7 / 68th	69th	17th	119th	97% - 210
Dobbs Ferry	48	97.8	95%	76%	81 / 26th	68th	90th	280th	99% - 54

PERCENTAGES = WEIGHT IN RANKING of OVERALL SCORE TOTALING 100% of Score:

Final 10% of the score (not indicated above) is related to the difference between the overall state assessment results vs. underserved state assessment results)



---

The background features a large, faint, circular seal of the Ashley School District. The seal contains the text "ASHLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT" around the perimeter and a central emblem with a book and a torch.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

---



# NEXT STEPS: ORGANIZATIONAL

- Set out new five-year strategic plan incorporating “forward-focused” educational vision; align practice to that vision for the future of the district
- Focus on innovation and flexibility in
  - Scheduling
  - Programming
  - Enhanced support systems for students
- Update and adhere to internal systems in human resources, business, and student learning data
  - Leverage the digital age



# NEXT STEPS: ORGANIZATIONAL

- Look for efficiency in how we utilize staff. For example:
  - Limit the number of teachers who travel between buildings
    - More teaching time and less travel time
    - Single “home” teachers are more connected to school community
- Ensure we are supporting the whole child, academically, socially, and emotionally
- Continually innovate, balancing with demands on community resources
- Present a budget that is aligned with vision and priorities. “It’s all connected”



# NEXT STEPS: PROGRAMMATIC

- New pathways for students to self-challenge
- Increase offerings of advanced classes at AHS
- Re-imagine 4th to 5th grade transition programming as well as overall student experience as students transition from school to school\*\*
- Establish grading and reporting standards to increase consistency, particularly at the secondary level
- Continue implementation of MTSS to inspire differentiated support in general education



# NEXT STEPS: PROGRAMMATIC

- Leverage MTSS to connect all students to our schools and our programs, emphasizing all are valued members of our school community
- Continue to focus our efforts on college counseling, highlighting expanded options for our students
- Ensure a productive and effective system for coaching teachers:
  - Providing instructional feedback
  - Create an environment for growth and learning for all through observation protocols



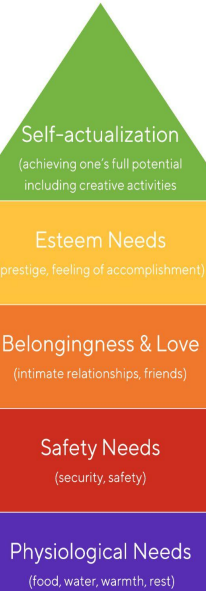
# PROGRAMMATIC - MAJOR THEME

## Considerations As We Reimagine Our 4th-5th Grade Transition Experience

- Social and Emotional Learning - Creating student connections
- Homework Evolution (over time)
- Grading Evolution (over time)
- Purposeful teaching and learning on executive function, organization and planning
- More standardized use of digital organization tools



# PROGRAMMATIC - MAJOR THEME



## Maslow's to Bloom's

01

### KNOWLEDGE:

Define,  
Identify,  
Describe,  
Recognize,  
Tell,  
Explain,  
Recite,  
Memorize,  
Illustrate,  
Quote

02

### UNDERSTAND:

Summarize,  
Interpret,  
Classify,  
Compare,  
Contrast,  
Infer,  
Relate,  
Extract,  
Paraphrase,  
Cite

03

### APPLY:

Solve,  
Change,  
Relate,  
Complete,  
Use,  
Sketch,  
Teach,  
Articulate,  
Discover,  
Transfer

04

### ANALYZE:

Contrast,  
Connect,  
Relate,  
Devise,  
Correlate,  
Illustrate,  
Distill,  
Conclude,  
Categorize,  
Take Apart

05

### EVALUATE:

Criticize,  
Reframe,  
Judge,  
Defend,  
Appraise,  
Value,  
Prioritize,  
Plan,  
Grade,  
Reframe

06

### CREATE:

Design,  
Modify,  
Role-Play,  
Develop,  
Rewrite,  
Pivot,  
Modify,  
Collaborate,  
Invent,  
Write



# To Consider Long-Term

- Revisit strategic plan. As we aim for consistency we must have a clear mission and vision for our work.
- School schedule, particularly at High School.
  - How can we ensure time in the school day for teachers and students to interact effectively on an individualized basis?
  - How do we slow down the frenetic pace of the day and create time for deeper learning?
- Connecting students to our schools. All students need to feel welcome and have a sense of belonging, ownership, and voice. We need to explore ways to make this happen more effectively through strong relationship building.



---



# THE FOUNDATION

---



# VISION - Learners for Life

**To work with all stakeholders to continue developing Ardsley's schools as centers of innovative and student-centered learning, where each student is prepared to succeed in college, career, and life.**



## Student Engagement In Learning

**“If we teach today’s students as we did yesterday’s,  
we rob them of tomorrow.”**

**– John Dewey**



# Student Engagement In Learning

**Nearly a century ago Dewey advocated for schools to be places where students:**

- **Learn by doing.** Put students consistently at the center of the learning process.
- **Regularly participate in discussion and debate.** Be able to put together reasoned arguments, listen, and learn from others.
- **Interact with one another and the world around them.** Direct connection and human interaction is becoming increasingly rare in many aspects of life. While students need to learn how to navigate the digital world, interaction in the here and now is also essential.
- **Connect with topics and ideas across content areas.** Learning should be interdisciplinary. Subjects cannot be silos and we need to help students find and make connections. So much of our curriculum content is naturally interconnected.



# OUR ULTIMATE GOAL

*To establish the foundation for our students' ongoing, self-motivated pursuit of knowledge.*



# Learners for Life

- Ensure learning is relevant and engaging, so that Ardsley's students build capacities for analytical rigor, imaginative thought and nuanced skepticism.
- Incorporate experiences that emphasize the importance of serving as conduits for the development of interconnected communities.
- Prepare our students to lead balanced lives characterized by learning and understanding, positive connections and the joy of discovering and creating.

**By focusing on each whole child, and collaborating with other stakeholders in the lives of our students, we will leverage academics and community support to develop and empower thoughtful, productive, caring, and well-rounded human beings.**



# Learners for Life

*How do we use time in school to foster long-term desire & ability to learn?*

**Focus on skills related to:**

- **Creativity and Innovation:** Producing new ideas and solutions provides a valuable commodity.
- **Problem Solving:** Solving real-world problems with a “solution fluency” is a highly marketable skill.
- **Critical Thinking:** The ability to think critically is a must in a world that bombards you with information.
- **Leadership:** Taking responsibility and influencing others to make good things happen.
- **Communication:** Working in teams to produce solutions to challenges.



# Learners for Life

*How do we use time in school to foster long-term desire & ability to learn?*

**Focus on skills related to:**

- **Collaboration:** Working in both physical and virtual groups takes proficiency in communication and empathy. Should be able to connect with someone across the world as effectively as someone across the room.
- **Information Management:** Determining what is valuable and discarding what is questionable.
- **Adaptability:** In an ever-changing world, it is essential to be able to adapt to change.
- **Curiosity:** Curiosity motivates learning.
- **Reflection:** Knowledge does not do us any good if we don't consider its value.



---



**THANK YOU!**  
**Questions?**

---