



**OFFICE OF THE RECEIVER**  
**QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT**  
**FOR THE PERIOD Q1 2025–2026**

**Dr. William H. Kerr, Court-Appointed Receiver**

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## **1. Authority and Purpose**

On October 11, 2000, Eugene W. Hickok, then Secretary of Education, certified Duquesne City School District as a distressed school district pursuant to section 691 of the Public-School Code, which has been repealed. The School District was managed under a Board of Control, which had its first legislative action meeting on November 27, 2000. From 2000 until 2012, the District continually remained subject to a declaration of financial distress and operated under the Board of Control, when it was designated as a severe financial recovery school district. Consistent with the subsequent Financial Recovery Act 141 of 2012, the School District was placed in Receivership and a Financial Recovery Plan was implemented on April 2, 2013. Should any ambiguity exist between the original Financial Recovery Plan of 2013, the Duquesne City School District Financial Recovery Plan of 2025 shall take precedence.

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 Q1–2025–2026– July 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025**, is provided herein.

## **2. School District Benefits of Receivership**

The School District was placed under Receivership in 2013 due to financial instability and academic performance issues, following a comprehensive review of its operations. Receivership has involved measures such as advancing state subsidies, providing a transitional loan, offering targeted grants, and implementing professional development programs funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to address these concerns.

Receivership has enabled the School District to efficiently secure, manage, and stabilize its assets, while eliminating liabilities and resolving financial disputes. Key policies and procedures have been established to ensure proper accounting, cash flow management, debt service, and timely payments. This intervention has also supported student achievement, professional development, and financial accountability—forming a foundation for ongoing school improvement.

The various Court appointed Receivers and the PDE-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, the PDE, Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), and Public Financial Management (PFM).

Each 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 Single Audit Report as of June 30, 2024, shows no current or potential litigation against Duquesne City School District, and the District is unaware of any unasserted claims or assessments.

## **3. Executive Summary**

Ongoing efforts to enhance curriculum, instruction, and assessment are part of the Duquesne City School District's approach to delivering educational programs and services. These initiatives involve collaboration among administration, faculty, and support staff. The District also incorporates financial sustainability, transparency, and accountability—including regular projection updates during the annual budget planning and approval process—as elements of its school improvement practices.

### *Quarterly Progress Report FY Q1-2025-2026 Highlights*

- The Chief Recovery Officer (CRO), appointed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), commenced School District duties beginning July 1, 2025. The CRO has supported research for 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade student transition plans and EITC programs, attended regular meetings with PDE, Public Financial Management, and Receiver / School District central office leadership. The CRO participated in Duquesne Education Association (DEA) monthly meetings and Duquesne Education Support Professional Association (DESPA) collective bargaining sessions.
- The Quarterly Receiver Advisory Committee meeting was held on July 8. Topics of discussion included administrative and financial updates, academic and educational programs, special education, human resources, dates of upcoming PDE meetings, and highlights from the Q4 2024–2025 Progress Report. An update about the implementation of the 2025 Duquesne City School District Financial Recovery Plan was presented.
- PDE officials visited Duquesne in July with a set agenda which included Monitoring Tool – Implementation and recording; FRP Prioritization of Initiatives; Business Office Training and Supports for Recovery districts; EAC – fall 2025; 2025–2026 SY Updates; and 2025–2026 SIF. PDE officials were introduced to Administrative Staff who also welcomed them to Duquesne.
- The School District received official notice from the PDE regarding the proposed tuition rate with Duquesne and East Allegheny and West Mifflin School Districts, subject to publishing the per-student tuition rate in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Pursuant to section 1607(b)(5) of the Pennsylvania School Code is \$18,031.86. The notice included the proposed rate and relevant information used to calculate the proposed rate.
- Worked continued on the Educational Partnership Agreement which includes two Exhibits: (1) Duquesne Transition Plan 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade and (2) Quarterly Progress Reports for Duquesne 9-12 resident students who attend East Allegheny and West Mifflin. The draft has been submitted to Dr. Gina Colarossi and Samantha Snyder, PDE, for review and edits. Upon receipt from PDE, a strategy will be developed for next steps to engage discussions with East Allegheny and West Mifflin School District administrators.
- The Receiver Advisory Committee meeting dates were established for 2025–2026: October 14 and January 13, April 14, and June 9, 2026. Notices have been distributed to the REC members.
- The PDE issued 2025–2026 Financial Recovery Resources: Act 85 of 2016 Loan Budget Impasse; School Improvement Update; Federal Monitor ESSA Docs; PIMS Manual and Calendar; Essential Bulletin for Educators; Special Education Learning Communities; Special Education Fiscal Modules; PaTTAN Customized Professional Development and Technical Assistance and Autism; MTSS Training for English Language Learners; and Tier 3 MTSS Training Behavior Support.
- The 2025–2026 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 2025–2026 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.

- The Court-Appointed Receiver, Chief Recovery Officer, Superintendent of Schools, Business Manager, and Administrators participate in monthly Financial Recovery Plan Monitoring Meetings with the Special Advisor to the Secretary and PDE officials. Duquesne provides updates on RBM actions, Finance and Budget, Academics, Special Education, Operations, Educational Technology, Student Highlights, Human Resources, Administration and Governance, Act 141 Advisory Committee, and Contracted Services.
- Current secondary (9–12) enrollment of Duquesne resident students at West Mifflin and East Allegheny is 261.
- Annual tuition to be paid by Duquesne for students attending schools elsewhere in 2025–2026 is projected to be \$9,916,433.93
- Current charter school enrollment K–12 is 208.
- Steel Center Career and Technical Education enrollment is thirty-four (34); CTE tuition per student is estimated to be \$5,910.57 for 2025–2026.
- Mon Valley Special School student enrollment is seven (7) with an overall estimated tuition cost of \$540,570.16 for 2025–2026.

#### 4. Supplemental Information

The DCSD website, [www.dukecitysd.org](http://www.dukecitysd.org), provides the general public with a historical summary of the School District's severe financial recovery status, its receivership, and criteria for exiting recovery status. The Financial Recovery Plan and Quarterly Progress Reports are posted for accountability, transparency, and fiscal responsibilities.

“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 2024–2025 and 2025–2026, are displayed on the following table.

**Duquesne K-8 School  
Student Enrollment  
September 30, 2025**

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sept 2024	64	63	53	56	43	55	52	42	45	473
Dec 2024	67	62	52	56	41	51	51	41	52	473
Mar 2025	72	64	50	58	40	51	48	41	50	474
Jun 2025	71	62	48	55	39	50	48	41	49	463
Sept 2025	54	63	55	46	56	34	48	51	38	442

## 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 September 30, 2025

Grade	Sections (Classroom Size)	Enrollment	ESL Enrollment
Kindergarten	3 (18.0)	54	7
First Grade	3 (21.0)	63	13
Second Grade	3 (18.3)	55	14
Third Grade	2 (23.0)	46	9
Fourth Grade	3 (18.6)	56	15
Fifth Grade	2 (17.0)	34	10
Sixth Grade	2 (24.0)	48	9
Seventh Grade*	4 (12.7)	51	14
Eighth Grade*	4 (9.5)	38	11
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>102**</b>

\*Blended grade levels

\*\*This has been adjusted from the September Monthly Report

## 7. Average Student Attendance

### Duquesne City School District Average Student Attendance 2024–2025 and 2025–2026

2024-2025 Month	Day Count	Avg. Monthly % Present	Avg. % Absent Count	Avg. Excused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count
Aug	3	90.44%	9.33%	9.5	33.33	0
Sept	19	89.69%	10.31%	25	22.86	0
Oct	23	89.25%	10.75%	26.02	25.28	0
Nov	18	88.05%	11.95%	22.52	34.75	0
Dec	14	82.96%	17.04%	31.89	49.07	0
Jan	18	84.35%	15.65%	22.91	51.11	0
Feb	18	86.48%	13.52%	26.63	37.58	0
Mar	20	86.84%	13.16%	28.5	33.64	0
April	19	85.94%	14.06%	31.39	34.44	0
May	21	86.38%	13.62%	21.19	42.16	0
June	8	74.65%	25.35%	33.18	84.43	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>86.37%</b>	<b>13.63%</b>	<b>26.29</b>	<b>37.92</b>	<b>0</b>

2025-2026 Month	Day Count	Avg. Monthly % Present	Avg. % Absent Count	Avg. Excused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count
Aug	3	93.17%	6.83%	8	2.5	0
Sept	20	90.99%	9.01%	15.44	3.25	0
Total	23	91.27%	8.73%	14.47	3.15	0

## 8. Significant Observations

Ending Q1 -2025-2026 student enrollment is 442 and the ELL enrollment is 102 students, indicating an offsetting number of incoming and outgoing students, including nine (9) less ELL students ending Q4-2024-2025.

## 9. Student Enrichment and Support Programs

Boys & Girls Club - 36 students enrolled (Grades K-8)

Oasis Tutoring - 0 Students received services (1-3)

School-level personnel coordinated and participated in the District’s annual Meet the Dukes Day, a highly successful community engagement event. The event offers families the opportunity to meet their child’s teacher, become informed about available school and community resources, and enjoy a school-community cookout. The event includes the distribution of book bags packed with supplies for second-grade students, student supplies provided by the United Way, and fresh produce donated by Highmark. Families and students enjoyed the opportunity to connect with staff and community partners in a welcoming environment.

During the first quarter, the school recorded 79 discipline referrals, which represented a 29% decrease from the same period in the prior school year. With a recorded two-year decline of 59% in student referrals, this reduction highlights the sustained impact of several key initiatives, including Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) in grades K-6, the House System in grades 7-8, and the implementation of a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS.) The newly assigned Assistant Principal – former Dean of Students and long-standing District teacher – has been key to this discipline data. The integration of Restorative Practices through the University of Pittsburgh has continued to foster positive student relationships and build a stronger sense of community and accountability among students.

The School District continues to maintain a strong and productive partnership with PACS (Pittsburgh Area Community Schools.) This collaboration has brought together educators, students, and families in a unified effort to surround students with a community of support – helping every child succeed both in school and in life. The PACS Coordinator provides direct socio-emotional enrichment and facilitates support services such as grief counseling, on-site food pantry access, and clothing support for families in need. PACS distributes weekend food bags to students experiencing food insecurity and / or homelessness, and participating in both school-sponsored and PACS-organized family engagement activities. Monthly attendance meetings are held between PACS staff, the Director of Truancy Services, the Administrative Coordinator for Attendance, and the Building Principal to develop and monitor attendance incentives that promote positive attendance habits among students and families.

Pressley Ridge, a non-profit agency, offers Emotional Support Services for K-8 students by providing two on-site monitors daily.

Through a Verizon Wireless Grant, the school has established a two-year Verizon Innovative Learning Schools (VILS) Coach / Cyber Teacher position, serving grades 5-8. The VILS Coach provides support implementing personalized learning strategies, increasing student voice and choice, and integrating technology and instruction. Students in grades 5-8 received an iPad equipped with 30GB of monthly data, enabling them to access learning resources and complete schoolwork from any location. The VILS Coach continues to provide individualized coaching to teachers that is focused on personalized learning, development of learning paths, and using technology platforms to enhance instruction and engagement.

A robust K-8 STEM Coding Program is supported by an external provider who collaborates with teachers during grade-level meetings. This program ensures all students receive hands-on coding and STEM instruction on a rotating weekly basis, enhancing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Attack Theater, an arts-integration organization, provides an external facilitator to work collaboratively with teachers in grades 3-5. Through the combination of modern dance, live music, and interdisciplinary arts, Attack Theater engages students in creative, movement-based learning experiences that enrich classroom instruction and fosters self-expression.

The Boys and Girls Club continues to provide valuable after-school programming, with (36) K-8 grade students enrolled. The program supports academic enrichment, social-emotional development, and recreational opportunities in a safe and structured environment.

## **10. State Monitoring**

The District is actively engaged in the ongoing State Monitoring processes for ESSER / ESSA. To ensure compliance and accuracy, the District has consulted with the regional coordinator for guidance on the necessary steps to revise the budget and update the Final Expenditure Report (FER.) The budget revision for ARP ESSER and ARP ESSA seven percent (7%) set-aside has been submitted and the District is currently awaiting instructions to complete the FER revision. The Corrective Actions for ESSA Monitoring issues have been uploaded along with supporting documents.

## **11. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

### **A. Curriculum and Instruction**

DCSD will partner with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 (AIU3) to provide comprehensive content coaching to all teachers. This collaboration will include structured professional development sessions in addition to ongoing classroom-based monitoring and coaching to support instructional improvement.

Teachers will participate in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), organized both by grade level and by content area. These PLCs will serve as a forum for educators to examine classroom- and student-level data in order to inform instructional planning. Meetings will also include opportunities for vertical alignment across grade levels and interdisciplinary collaboration. Data sources used during PLCs will include benchmarking assessments, daily exit tickets, anecdotal records, and proficiency data from online learning platforms. Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, PLCs will implement a new data-driven protocol aligned to the District-led book study of *Leverage Leadership* and the Financial Recovery Plan.

The District continues to prioritize personalized learning across all grade levels. Teachers will utilize individualized learning paths to ensure students receive instruction tailored to their current

skill levels, with a focus on accelerating growth and closing achievement gaps.

To further strengthen mathematics instruction, DCSD will pilot *Illustrative Mathematics* during the 2025–2026 school year as a core curricular resource. Teachers received professional development on this program prior to the start of the school year. Additionally, AIU3 content coaches will provide targeted coaching and ongoing professional development to support effective implementation of this new resource.

## **B. Professional Development**

- VILS – Blended Learning, grades 5-8
- Illustrative Math, K-8 math teachers
- Youth Mental Health and First Aid
- IXL, grades K-8
- CPR / First Aid / Stop the Bleed
- Math Manipulatives, K-8 math teachers
- Restorative Practices / Team Building, grades K-8
- One Stone, grades 7-8, ELL, and Specials
- Attack Theater, grades K-4
- IEP training, all teachers
- Magic School AI, all grade 4-8 teachers
- Data Drive
- Classroom Management

## **C. IXL Integration and Impact**

The Duquesne City School District utilizes IXL as a comprehensive instructional and assessment tool that provides continuous benchmarks to monitor student growth and mastery across math, ELA and science subject areas. IXL’s diagnostic component delivers real-time data that identifies individual student strengths and learning gaps, allowing teachers to tailor instruction to meet diverse learning needs. The platform’s alignment to the state standards ensures that students are working on grade-level appropriate content while also receiving personalized learning paths that adapt to their performance.

For teachers, IXL offers actionable insights through detailed reports on skill progression, standards alignment, and student engagement. This data-driven approach equips educators with the information needed to plan targeted interventions, adjust instructional strategies, and monitor progress toward closing achievement gaps. For students, IXL provides immediate feedback and individualized practice that fosters both mastery of foundational skills and confidence in applying knowledge to increasingly complex tasks.

By embedding benchmarks within daily practice, IXL serves as both a diagnostic and instructional resource that has measurable growth for all learners.

## **12. Technology, Digital Learning, and Innovation**

Continuing the efforts reported throughout the last school year, the District continued to strengthen its technological foundation throughout the first quarter of 2025–2026, advancing key infrastructure and instructional initiatives align with our strategic goals. A major highlight of the final quarter of the 2024–2025 school year was the District-wide implementation of Magic School AI, an educational platform designed to help teachers integrate artificial intelligence into their instructional planning and classroom practices. This innovative tool is supporting more personalized learning pathways for

students, while empowering educators to streamline tasks and differentiate instruction more effectively in the 2025–2026 school year.

Building on previous e-Rate investments, the District has successfully acquired and installed fifty (50) new wireless access points, enhancing the internal Wi-Fi network and ensuring strong, reliable connectivity across all building spaces beyond industry standards. This expansion reinforces uninterrupted access to digital platforms – especially during high-demand instructional and testing periods. These measures have brought operations to a 100% uptime since implementation with performance metrics that exceed industry standards.

To prep for the 2025–2026, all student iPads were collected, reprovisioned, and assigned new, restricted profiles to enhance both functionality and security, while ensuring students receive age and grade-level appropriate applications and have an increased focus on coursework assigned while minimizing and nearly eliminating distractions when using the digital classroom. These updated configurations align with instructional goals while supporting appropriate use of technology across grade levels.

The fourth quarter of the 2024–2025 school year also featured additional key infrastructure improvements, such as network updates and server room reorganization to ensure optimal performance, system stability, and future scalability. Server updates have been closely managed providing server assets with the most up-to-date security patches, ensuring the security and integrity of District data. The installation of new security cameras further enhances building safety and aligns with the District’s broader security plan.

To support long-term cost savings and improve service efficiency, the District has completed the transition to a new phone service provider thereby consolidating communication systems and reducing recurring expenses without compromising service quality. During this process, redundant cross-connections were removed, re-run, or terminated, improving call quality, analog fax transmission speeds, and stabilizing automatic alarm dialer communications, enhancing the protection of the building and its assets. During this process, a new T1 PRI was installed with in-house made cabling to assure clear telephone service to all phone users. Further securing the financial success of the District, redundant service contracts have been eliminated or are current in review. The phone system contracts are among those that have been canceled; the benefit of the services that were being provided were not contingent with the District’s Financial Recovery Plan. Nor were services being delivered as expected and / or without the need for contracting services with a third-party intermediary service provider.

### **13. Special Education Services**

#### **A. Special Education Enrollment**

As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, the District had a total of 116 students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) who are being supported: (95) in-district, (19) specialized educational placements, and (2) Duquesne Cyber Academy.

#### **B. Staffing**

The Special Education Department began the 2025–2026 school year fully staffed with a total of ten special education teachers, one speech and language pathologist, and one half-time cyber academy teacher.

<b>Support Category</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>
Learning Support	3.5
Emotional Support	2.5

Support Category	No. of Teachers
Autistic Support	1 (FT K-2)
Life Skills / Autistic Support	2
Speech and Language Support	1

C. During the 2025–2026 school year, the Special Education Department is prioritizing efforts to strengthen the capacity of our general education teachers in effectively implementing students’ IEPs within the regular education setting. Our goal is to ensure that every teacher has the knowledge, tools, and support needed to provide high-quality instruction that meets the diverse needs of all learners. By fostering collaboration between general and special education staff, offering targeted professional development, and providing practical resources, the District is committed to creating inclusive classrooms where students with disabilities can fully access the curriculum and thrive academically and socially.

## 14. Student Services

### A. IST / DSAP Q4 Data

IST		DSAP	*
Total Students Referred	3	Total Students Referred	4
Referrals Reopened	0	Referrals Reopened	0
Cases Closed	0	Cases Closed	0
Cases Active	3	Cases Active	2

\*McKinney-Vento Data included in DSAP

### B. McKinney-Vento Summary

School District personnel transported all accounted for McKinney-Vento families daily to and from school. There are currently thirteen (13) students identified. All primary parents of families experiencing homelessness have been given the opportunity to utilize available resources depending on specific needs from Pittsburgh Area Community in Schools (PACS), Duquesne Family Center, Duquesne City School District, and Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

### C. Foster Student Summary

School District personnel have identified two (2) in-district foster care students.

### D. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Students are awarded individual PBIS points for adhering to school-wide expectations: Be Safe, Be Responsible, and Be Respectful. Students earn PBIS points, commonly referred as “Duke Bucks”, for demonstrating these expectations. Each week, students who earn ten or more points receive a PBIS certificate to recognize these efforts.

The PBIS store has been a tremendous success. Students with ten or more “Duke Bucks” have the opportunity to shop for rewards each week. Top-earning students are recognized with certificates and “Duke” spirit merchandise monthly.

## **15. Mental Health and Behavior Support Services**

The Youth Engagement Support Services (YESS) Pressley Ridge partnership continues to provide ongoing support for students in their classrooms. We continue to see improvements with the students because they are having their needs met, a testament to the supports in place. The evidence collected has shown 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 District is also working with Pressley Ridge to identify a BEST support for the 3-5 Emotional Support Classroom. To date, no one has been hired; however, Pressley Ridge is actively recruiting to identify someone.

On August 20-21, 2025, all staff members participated in Youth Mental Health and First Aid with instructors from Chatham University. The training was provided at no cost to the District as it was funded through leftover funds that the Allegheny Health Department held from the SEEKS grant. This training also provided trauma-informed approaches for teachers and staff to be able to implement into their classrooms beginning with the first day of students.

The Mental Health and Behavior Support team reviews all students receiving services through the Student Assistance Program (SAP) and ensures there are supports in place for students; Auberle has provided two in-person therapists which has been beneficial for students who need this support. The Instructional Support Team is being reconfigured this year to ensure teachers are providing the interventions and documenting the outcomes prior to the referral for special education and / or out-of-district placement.

## **16. District Cyber Academy and Marketing / Recruiting Plan**

The District Cyber Academy, in partnership with Allegheny Intermediate Unit / Waterfront Learning, offers flexible, research-based online learning via Accelerate. One District teacher instructs students online and is available to support students through daily office hours. Students benefit from a high-quality curriculum and maintain access to all Duquesne programs, activities, sports, and clubs. The teacher is also responsible for contacting District families who have their K-8 student in another cyber school to discuss our program and what we offer. To date, one student has returned.

The 2025–2026 Marketing / Recruiting Plan is being reevaluated to ensure effectiveness. The District’s goal is to continue to boost student enrollment at Duquesne K-8 School and lower charter tuition costs. It leverages current resources, social media, and staff to engage the community and highlight Duquesne City School District’s legacy. The “REDISCOVER DUQUESNE” brand will continue to promote a flexible online education option for families.

## **17. Financial Recovery Plan**

Judge Alan D. Hertzberg extended Receivership for three years (effective April 1, 2025–March 31, 2028), re-appointed the Court-Appointed Receiver, and approved the School District’s 2025 Financial Recovery Plan (FRP). The FRP is available to stakeholders and is posted on the School District’s website.

## **18. Budget and Finance (YTD)**

### **A. Residency Verification Program**

#### *Current Status*

The School District currently enrolls an estimated 475 students in neighboring high schools, charter schools, and cyber charter programs. Of these, approximately 180 attend charter schools and 40 participate in cyber charter programs. The average tuition cost for charter and cyber charter schools is \$14,500, while high school tuition at East Allegheny and West Mifflin is set at \$18,031.87 for the 2025–2026 academic year, representing a significant budgetary consideration. The District employs all available resources to verify and reconcile student residency; however, monitoring remains challenging, particularly with transient populations.

### ***Duquesne's Plan***

The School District will use a single residency verification process for all students. Thomas Reuters Solutions, supported by a fraud prevention consultant, will provide data for follow-ups. Pending Receiver approval, the proposed contract for residency verification services is \$11,000 annually for a three-year period. Similar school districts found 3-5% of students were out-of-district, covering cyber-charter, sending school, and brick-and-mortar charter enrollments.

When 3% of an estimated 475-student population consists of out-of-district families, that equals (15) students. With an average tuition of \$16,250 per student, this amounts to a total savings of \$243,000. Additionally, two administrative staff members will have unrestricted access to review new enrollments and verify residency documents for potential fraud.

- B. The Receiver, Superintendent of Schools, and Administrators met with Public Financial Management Consultants to review the progress of the Data Collection Monitoring Instrument, including an explanation of its format and categories used for monitoring and tracking. Public Financial Management and School District Administrators are collaborating with the IT Department to refine the system, focusing on descriptors for supporting evidence. The tracking system was implemented on July 1, 2025.

A Board Resolution was approved in May 2025, for School Year 2025-2026, including the following key components:

1. Instructs the Administration to develop Business Office and Human Resources Procedure Manuals, in collaboration with designated Administrators and aligned with the School District's Financial Recovery Plan, effective for the 2025–2026 school year.
2. Instructs the Administration to perform an internal Human Resources audit which will include best practices, actions taken, revised/new policies and procedures, employee position controls, and human resources software and online technology tools.
3. Instructs the Administration to perform a thorough review and update of all administrative, professional, and support staff job descriptions to ensure they meet all work expectations and responsibilities. The job descriptions will include provisions for additional work assignments, assigned supervision, annual performance evaluations, and performance improvement plans.
4. Establishes Guiding Principles and Goals to optimize budget and finance operations for greater efficiency and accountability, improved resource allocations, and increased transparency for all School District operations.

The 2025–2026 Final General Fund Budget was approved at the June Receiver Business Meeting, which includes a 1.39 mil increase with a balanced budget of \$22,919,191.00. The new real estate tax rate will be 22.58 mils and existing rates for Act 511 taxes will continue. The median assessed homestead property will pay \$25.00 more for the year.

The District Administration provided the 2025–2026 Final General Fund Budget information to Public Financial Management consultants. The School District officials requested that PFM

update the model assumptions and financial projections to include the State Legislators and Governor’s subsidy allocations for 2025–2026, subject to final Commonwealth approval which currently is at an impasse.

The Business Manager completed and filed the required April, May and June 2024–2025 Cash Flow Report for the Department of Education. It is intended as 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.

Each 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 Annual Financial Report for 2024–2025 is underway in cooperation with the Local Auditor.

The School District faces ongoing financial pressure from increasing charter school tuition costs. For 2025–2026, non-special education charter tuition is \$14,400.14 per student, up \$58.13 from last year, while special education tuition is \$38,951.71 per student, down \$3,017.92. The special education funding formula assumes only 16% of students qualify, but the District's actual rate is much higher at 25.2%, causing the formula to underestimate enrollment and misallocate funds.

The following chart provides a visual with specific data to Duquesne’s preliminary Average Daily Membership for 2025–2026; Special Education Population with 16% assumption required by PDE; Actual Special Education Population of the District at 25.2%; and Additional Cost to the District using the required 16% assumption.

Categories and Descriptions	Average Daily Memberships	Special Education Tuition Rate for 2025-2026	Number of Special Education Students at Charter Schools as of September 30, 2025	Charter School Tuition Cost for Special Education Students
DCSD Average Daily Membership for 2024-2025	941.138	-	-	-
Special Education Population with 16% assumption required by PDE	150.82	\$38,951.71	47	\$1,830,730.37
Actual Special Education Population of District is 25.2%	237.166	\$29,980.20	47	\$1,409,069.40
Additional Cost to District using required 16% assumption	-	\$8,971.51	-	\$421,660.97

## 19. General Fund Balance Analysis

### Duquesne City School District General Fund Balance Analysis June 30, 2024

GF Balance Analysis June 30, 2024		
Non-spendable		
Pre-paid	\$128,647	-
Other	-	-
Total non-spendable	-	\$128,647
Restricted	-	-

<b>GF Balance Analysis June 30, 2024</b>		
Committed	-	-
Unassigned	-	\$1,724,115
Assigned		\$2,375,000
Total fund balance as of June 30, 2024 (audited)	-	\$1,617,125
Surplus (deficit) for FY 2023-2024	-	\$2,610,634
<b>Total fund balance as of June 30, 2024 (audited)</b>	-	<b>\$4,227,759</b>

**20. Bonds and Notes Payable**

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

**Bonds and Notes Payable  
September 30, 2025**

<b>Fiscal Year Ending June 30</b>	<b>Bonds Payable</b>	<b>Notes Payable</b>	<b>Total Bonds and Notes Payable</b>	<b>Total Annual Debt Service</b>
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	7,610,883	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
2028**	8,355,834	-	8,355,834	758,374

\*Audited financial statements  
\*\*Projected

**21. 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**

**September 30, 2025**

<b>Receiving Schools</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Students June 30</b>	<b>Students September 30</b>	<b>Projected 2025-2026 Tuition</b>
West Mifflin Area School District	9 – 12	251	234	\$4,219,455.24
East Allegheny School District	9 – 12	17	27	486,860.22
Charter schools, regular education	K – 8	134	131	1,886,418.34
Charter schools, special education	K – 8	41	39	1,519,116.69
Charter schools, regular education	9 – 12	25	30	432,004.20
Charter schools, special education	9 – 12	13	8	287,613.68
Special Education schools	K – 12	10	22	1,084,965.56
<b>Totals</b>		<b>491</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>\$9,916,433.93</b>

Changes in individual tuition enrollments in the categories of receiving schools can be seen by comparing enrollments from June 30, 2025, to September 30, 2025, in the table above. Enrollment figures for East Allegheny and West Mifflin was reconciled at the end of FY 2024–2025. 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 261 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 Education regarding the calculated student tuition rate of \$18,031.86 that Duquesne will pay East Allegheny and West Mifflin School Districts in 2025–2026, based on Section 1607(b)(4) of the Pennsylvania School Code. [For comparison purposes, the School District pays a tuition rate of \$14,400.14 for Charter School students.]

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.

**Duquesne City School District, Act 1 Index**

	<b>2025 26</b>	<b>2026 27</b>	<b>2027 28</b>	<b>2028 29</b>	<b>2029 30</b>	<b>2030 31</b>	<b>2031 32</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Projected</b>
Projected Base Index	4.0%	3.7%	3.4%	3.2%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%
Projected Act 1 Index	6.6%	6.1%	5.6%	5.3%	5.3%	5.0%	4.6%

**22. 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 academics, the arts, athletics, and other school community activities.

### **23. Human Resources – Personnel / Staffing Assignments**

#### ***Settlements and other Personnel Actions***

There was one (1) personnel settlement and release during this Quarter.

#### ***Personnel / Staffing Assignments***

The following chart presents a summary of staffing at the DCSD as of September 30, 2025. Parentheses indicate changes from the June 30, 2025, summary.

**Duquesne City School District  
2024–2025 Staffing Summary  
September 30, 2025**

<b>DCSD Staffing Summary</b>			
Professional Staff (+0.5)	44	Administrators (0)	4
Instructional Support Staff (0)	12	Coordinators and Supervisors (0)	4
Other Support Staff (0)	9	Confidential Staff (+1)	4

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

Following a mid-level special education classroom teacher vacancy from the previous quarter, one special education classroom teacher was hired.

Following the retirement of one regular education classroom teacher at the conclusion of the 2024 – 2025 school year and the resignation of one regular education classroom teacher, one regular education classroom teacher was hired. No vacancy exists.

Following the retirement of one paraprofessional, one qualifying substitute custodian was promoted to paraprofessional.

Following the 2023-24 third quarter furloughing of one full-time K-8 cyber school teaching position to part-time, the position was reinstated to full-time status.

Following the resignation of the Director of Educational Technology / Cyber School Academy Principal / K-8 Assistant Building Principal, the job title was modified to K-8 Assistant Building Principal / Coordinator of English Language Learners and Transition Liaison Services, the Dean of Students was promoted.

Following the promotion of the Dean of Students, the position will remain vacant for the 2025 – 2026 school year.

Following the reassignment of the Accountant from the 2024-25 third quarter, one accountant was hired.

To meet the changing needs of the School District and to streamline administrative duties, the K-8 Building Principal / LEA / Federal Programs Coordinator job title was modified to include Cyber Academy Principal.

Following the retirement of the Director of Literacy and Innovation from the previous quarter and to meet the changing needs of the School District, the position has been eliminated.

## **24. Board Operation Guidelines, Board Policies and Administrative Regulations**

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

### **Board Operation Guidelines**

- 004-BOG-0 Statement of Financial Interests (new)
- 004-BOG-2 Board of School Directors Vacancy Application Form (new)

### **Board Policies**

- 103 Discrimination / Harassment Affecting Students
- 104 Discrimination / Harassment Affecting Staff
- 234 Pregnant / Parenting / Married Students
- 308 Employment Contract / Board Resolution
- 317 Conduct / Disciplinary Procedures
  - 317.1 Educator of Misconduct
- 333 Professional Development
- 626 Federal Fiscal Compliance
  - 626.3 Conflict of Interest
- 718 Service Animals in School
- 823 Opioid Antagonist
- 827 Conflict of Interest (new)

### **Administrative Regulations**

- 103 – Attachment 4, Parental Objection to Participation Letter
- 234-AR-0 Pregnant / Parenting / Married Students
- 247-AR-0 Hazing
- 247-AR-2 Notice to Complainant and/or Parents / Guardians of Complainant
- 249-AR-0 Bullying / Cyberbullying
- 249-AR-2 Notice to Complainant and/or Parents / Guardians of Complainant
- 308-AR-1 Employee Resignations
- 308-AR-2 Form for Acceptance of Resignations
- 313-AR-0 Observation and Practice / Framework for Evaluation PA-ETEP Classroom Teacher Performance Improvement Plans / 13-1 Classification
- 313-AR-1 Growth Awareness Plan
- 317-AR-2 Arrest and Conviction Report
- 626-AR-0 Administration of Federal Funds – Types of Costs, Financial Obligations, & Property Management
- 626-AR-1 Allowability of Costs – Federal Programs
- 626-AR-2 Cash Management – Federal Programs
- 626-AR-3 Cash management – Federal Programs
- 626-AR-4 Subrecipient Monitoring Procedures – Federal Programs
- 718-AR-0 Service Animals in School (new)
- 718-AR-1 Evaluation of Requests by Students and Employees (new)
- 824-AR-0 Maintaining a Safe, Respectful, Responsible, & Dignified School Building

## **25. Facilities and Property Services**

### **A. Maintenance**

The Superintendent of Schools and the Administration have completed a Facilities Master Plan that is consistent with the Financial Recovery Plan. The Plan includes an Executive Summary that focuses on Capital Improvements; Strategic Alignment; Regulatory Alignment; Utilization and Adaptability; and Funding Strategy. Incremental components in the 5-year plan include: Immediate Safety and Operational Upgrades; Life Safety, Site Enhancements, and Building Efficiency; Access and Control and Equipment Modernization; Student and Community Use Enhancements; and Modernization and Emergency Readiness.

The Director of Facilities, Transportation and Security and the Maintenance Technician completed several preventative and routine maintenance repairs during this quarter. These included, but are not limited to, continuing efforts to upgrade the security system; industry standard training for floor classroom care; installation of new fencing at the stadium; new Unit 7 condenser fan; emergency repairs to the School District truck; and re-purposing building space for a new data room.

Custodial, maintenance, and security employee evaluations have been completed for 2024–2025. Vehicle insurance cards have been renewed and placed in District vehicles.

The Director of Facilities, Transportation and Security and the Maintenance Technician attended a facilities vendor expo to remain current on school/facility safety, latest products, and new equipment.

### **B. School Safety & Security**

Fire and bus evacuation drills have been held as required throughout the first quarter of 2025–2026. All District staff have been provided with updated emergency drill procedures and building exit strategies.

Monthly Safety and Security and Threat Assessment meeting have been scheduled throughout the school year, with meetings beginning with the return of 10-month staff. Staff are scheduled to participate in Threat Assessment training in the upcoming quarter. The District's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) has been updated and submitted to the Allegheny Emergency Management Division.

Medical AEDs, Stop the Bleed kits and first aid stations continued to be monitored by the Certified School Nurse and have been found in compliance.

In collaboration with the local law enforcement agency and municipal leaders, student arrival and dismissal times have been established for the current school year. Local law enforcement agents have increased their presence during these key times with has assisted in creating a safer and secured environment for students and staff. To assist with potential emergency responses to the school building, the District provided the City Mayor's Office, Chief of Police and Fire Chief with updated staff, classroom and phone extension lists.

The District experienced minor property damage, inside and out; the majority of the inside damage has been found in multiple student restrooms. Damages include graffiti, threatening remarks, peeling paint, and separation of restroom stall partitions pulling from wall anchors. The Director of Facilities, Transportation and Security is notified as necessary to organize repairs. Each instance of

suspected vandalism has been investigated, with video security footage being key in this process; all threats were determined to be benign.

Professional development concerning safety and security has been scheduled for October 10<sup>th</sup>. Several presenters are scheduled, including representatives from Caring Connections for Youth, PaCIC, and an experienced retired police officer who is currently a licensed private investigator. Professional development activities will include several active training sessions to better prepare staff for emergency situations.

Several student centered safety and security preparation sessions are scheduled to occur for K-8 students, including District-wide Safe2Say training. K-2 grade students will participate in Rocket Rules “Anti-Bullying” and “Crossing Safely” sessions and 3-8 grade students will participate in “Drug Safety and Peer Pressure” sessions during the next quarter.

## **26. Governance and Administration**

Dr. Sue A. Mariani, Chief School Administrator, is supervised by Dr. William H. Kerr, who was reappointed as the Court-Appointed Receiver, effective April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2028. 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. Carrie Rowe, Secretary of Education, via Dr. Gina Colarossi, 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:

1. Board President Sonya Gooden
2. Board Vice President Rosia Reid
3. School Director Jocelyn Brown
4. School Director Candice Butler-Davis
5. School Director Burton Comensky
6. School Director Laura Elmore
7. School Director Calvin Harris
8. School Director Connie Lucas-Kemp
9. School Director Cedric Robertson

Members of the Duquesne City Board of School Directors participated in two (2) regular Receiver Business Meetings [August 12 (*recessing and reconvening August 15*) and September 23]

School Board members in attendance at the Receiver Business Meetings: August 12 (8) and September 23 (6).

## **27. Next Report**

The next Quarterly Progress Report will cover the Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025–2026, October 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025. That report is expected to be filed in January 2026.

## **28. Acknowledgements**

*The following individuals contributed to this report:*

- William H. Kerr, Ed.D., Court-Appointed Receiver
- John Hansen, Ed.D., Chief Recovery Officer
- Sue A. Mariani, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
- Devin M. Fortna, B.S., Business Manager
- Pam Zackel, M. Ed., Director of Special Education
- Charles Robinson, Director of Information Technology and Truancy Services
- Erica Slobodnik, M. Ed., K-8 Building Principal / LEA / Federal Programs Coordinator
- Jennifer Yocca, M.Ed., Assistant Principal / Coordinator of ELL and Transition Services
- Brian Stowell, MBA, Director of Facilities, Transportation, and Security
- Brandon Irdi, Act 44 Safety and Security Coordinator
- Crystal Irdi, AAS, Executive Assistant / Coordinator for Human Resources, Food and Nutrition Services, and Open Records / Board Secretary
- Sara Fite, Administrative Coordinator for Enrollment, Attendance, Homeless and Foster Care Services