Allentown SCHOOL DISTRICT

Strategic Plan









Lighting the Way

A Blueprint for Innovation & Excellence 2030


ASD
Allentown
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dr. Carol D. Birks

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT/CEO

Dear Allentown School District's Learning Community:

I am honored to present our comprehensive Strategic Plan, entitled, *Lighting the Way: A Blueprint for Innovation and Excellence 2030*. This plan represents our love, hope, unwavering dedication, and investment in the 16,700 students and the 2,500 staff members of the Allentown School District. We are targeting 2030 for the full realization of our Strategic Plan to benefit everyone within the Allentown School District.

Our approach is both comprehensive and forward-thinking, ensuring the execution of necessary strategic actions. Given the complexity and scope of this endeavor , a phased approach is required, incorporating thorough planning and extensive stakeholder engagement.

Using the guiding principles of innovation and excellence, let this serve as an evolving document, outlining an exciting future for our students that attend the Allentown School District. We have set the stage to initiate a movement that will enable us to reimagine the structure, focus, and performance of the Allentown School District, and to unlock and maximize the potential inherent in every student we have the privilege to serve.

The Strategic Planning Process was rigorous and time-consuming, resulting in a redefined Mission, Vision and Core Values. Our Portrait of a Learner that outlines the competencies and transferable skills essential to supporting our student's long-term success. Lastly, this plan includes clearly defined and attainable goals, strategies, and actions for the future.

Lighting the Way sets the stage for the next decade and will focus on delivering strategic actions for defined goals aligned with our core values and our priorities of Academic Excellence, Safety, and Whole Child Development, Creating Pathways for Tomorrow, Empowering Families: Strengthening Partnerships, Exceptional Workforce & Talent Management, Organizational Efficiencies & Effectiveness, and Technology For Universal Learning.

Our commitment to access and opportunity is rooted in the tenets of our District's core values and is integrated into our newly identified priorities. Each priority area contains a core commitment, which underscores its importance.

Words fail to convey the depth of gratitude I feel towards all who contributed to this Strategic Plan. I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our School Board of Directors for allowing us to journey together. I also thank the Steering Committee and Advisory Groups for their dedication, collaboration, contributions, insights, and investments.

For a plan of this magnitude to succeed, it was important to incorporate all voices in our community. To accomplish this, we assembled a Steering Committee of more than 100 actively participating students, families, professionals, educational leaders, prominent community members, and corporate executives. This committee looked to the future while honoring past frameworks. They developed a Theory of Action to reimagine and transform our District, convening monthly to conceptualize, deliberate, and refine their vision of propelling us toward becoming one of Pennsylvania's highest-performing districts.

We ensured community investment by conducting a record-turnout Community Survey. Focus Groups then reviewed the Steering Committee's work to align with community desires, hopes, and dreams for the children of Allentown. Finally, Advisory Groups provided final revisions to the Strategic Plan and will guide implementation next year.

I invite you to review *Lighting the Way*: A Blueprint for Innovation and Excellence 2030, and share in the excitement as we work together to make this a reality. The strategic actions identified in this plan will outline our short- and long-term work to create a cohesive and impactful path to success for our District, students, and community.

I am honored to serve as your Superintendent. We get better together! All our strengths are needed!

Best,

Dr. Carol D. Birks

Dr. Carol D. Birks
Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer

At-A-Glance

As of 2024



16 Elementary Schools
(Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 5)

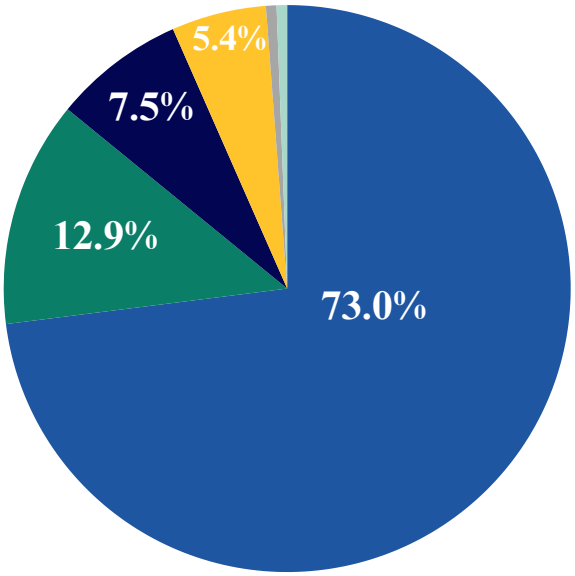


4 Middle Schools
(Grades 6-8)

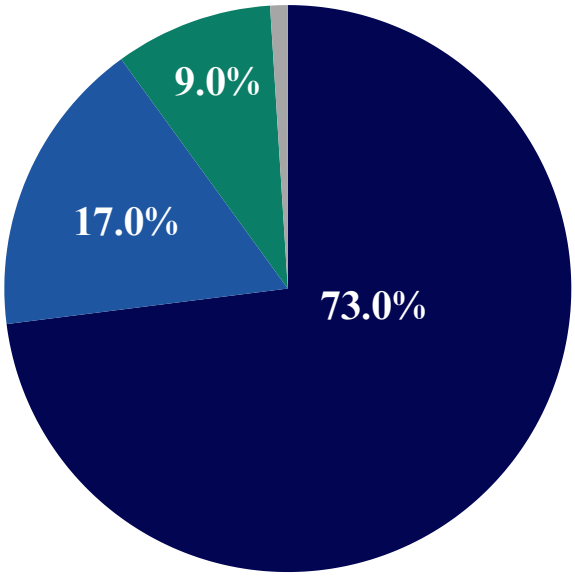


3 High Schools
(Grades 9-12)

Student Demographics



Staff Demographics



Hispanic
White
Asian
Black
Two or More Races
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Student Demographics

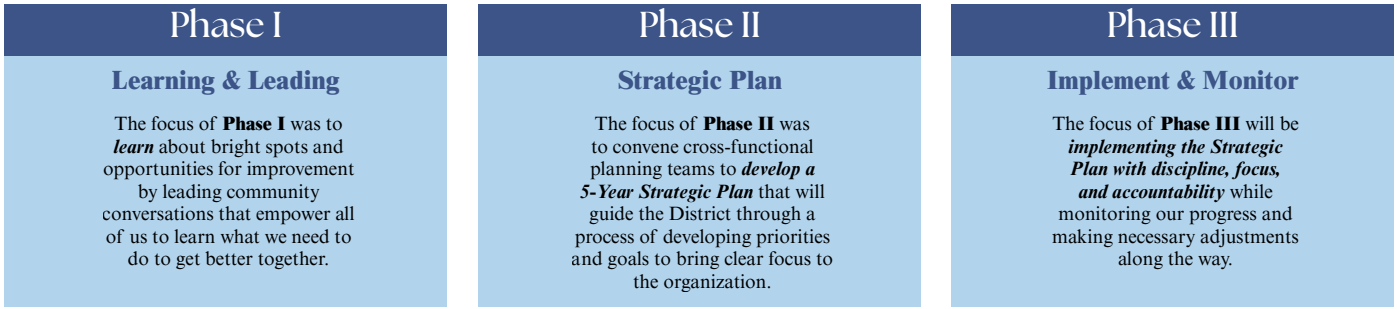
77.6%	17.6%	17.9%	0.9%	2.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learners	Special Education	Foster Care	Students Experiencing Homelessness

Enrollment

16,697	8,016	3,369	5,312
Total	Elementary School	Middle School	High School

In her role as Acting Superintendent, Dr. Birks utilized the Entry Planning Process, to assess how the schools are working toward meeting the district's goals and vision for school improvement. This approach is a researched-based framework, designed to counter the forces that trigger unilateral rather than collaborative decision-making. *A Learning & Leading Plan* was developed to gather information about the Allentown School District efficiently. This process assessed the strengths and areas of growth of the organizational culture, systems, and practices; created a sense of urgency; determined quick wins, and identified key priorities.

The phases of the *Learning & Leading Plan* included the following: (1) Transition: (Pre-Entry), Listening and Learning: (2) Entry: Focus and Framing, and (3) Planning: Empowering and Accelerating. This initiative aimed to canvas, listen to, and learn from the community to understand their collective vision for the Allentown School District.



As the graphic indicates, The Strategic Planning Process included three phases: Learning & Leading, developing the Strategic Plan, and Implementing and Monitoring the plan. *The Learning & Leading Plan* was steeped in a three-pronged inquiry approach that will guide our thinking and identify goals, outcomes, and actions to influence a complex system focused on continuous improvement, talent management, and development.

A Model Portfolio District

Based on research from the Center on Reinventing Public Education, (2022) A Model Portfolio District utilizes seven components of the Portfolio Strategy to structure reform efforts. The components of the Portfolio Strategy are:

1. **High-quality educational options and choices for all families.** Schools are provided a variety of school choices including theme-based academies, community schools, and magnet schools.

2. **School autonomy.** Decisions about a school come from individuals who work inside the school because they are closest to the students. When a school is struggling in meeting quality standards as measured by student achievement, the District provides targeted support and intervenes in school-based decision-making.

3. **Student-based funding.** The size of a school's budget is based on the number and needs of the students enrolled. Principals, through School Governance Councils, annually develop their budgets based on a school's needs and priorities.

4. **Talent management approach.** Quality systems are developed for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators, administrators, and support staff. Principals are empowered to hire and evaluate staff at the school level based on their school designs.

5. **Theme-based Partnerships.** Schools partner with local, state, and national organizations to strengthen and grow the school district and connect students to real-world skills and career paths.

6. **Performance-based accountability for schools.** Schools are accountable for achieving high performance on academic measures which are reported using an overall and school based growth index. With autonomy comes accountability for student results and school quality.

7. **Extensive public engagement.** Parents, families, and community members are vital to the success of our schools and there is dynamic and regular communication in all directions.

Using the Model Portfolio District Strategy as an anchor the District used additional research from Bryk to create Networked Improvement Communities of Schools (NICS). In order to more effectively service school communities, the District organized into three NICS, designed to address specific needs and provide targeted support to students and families. As part of Allentown School District Central Office Transformation, Central Office staff across departments are aligned to provide support across the levels of the system. (Bryk, 2015).

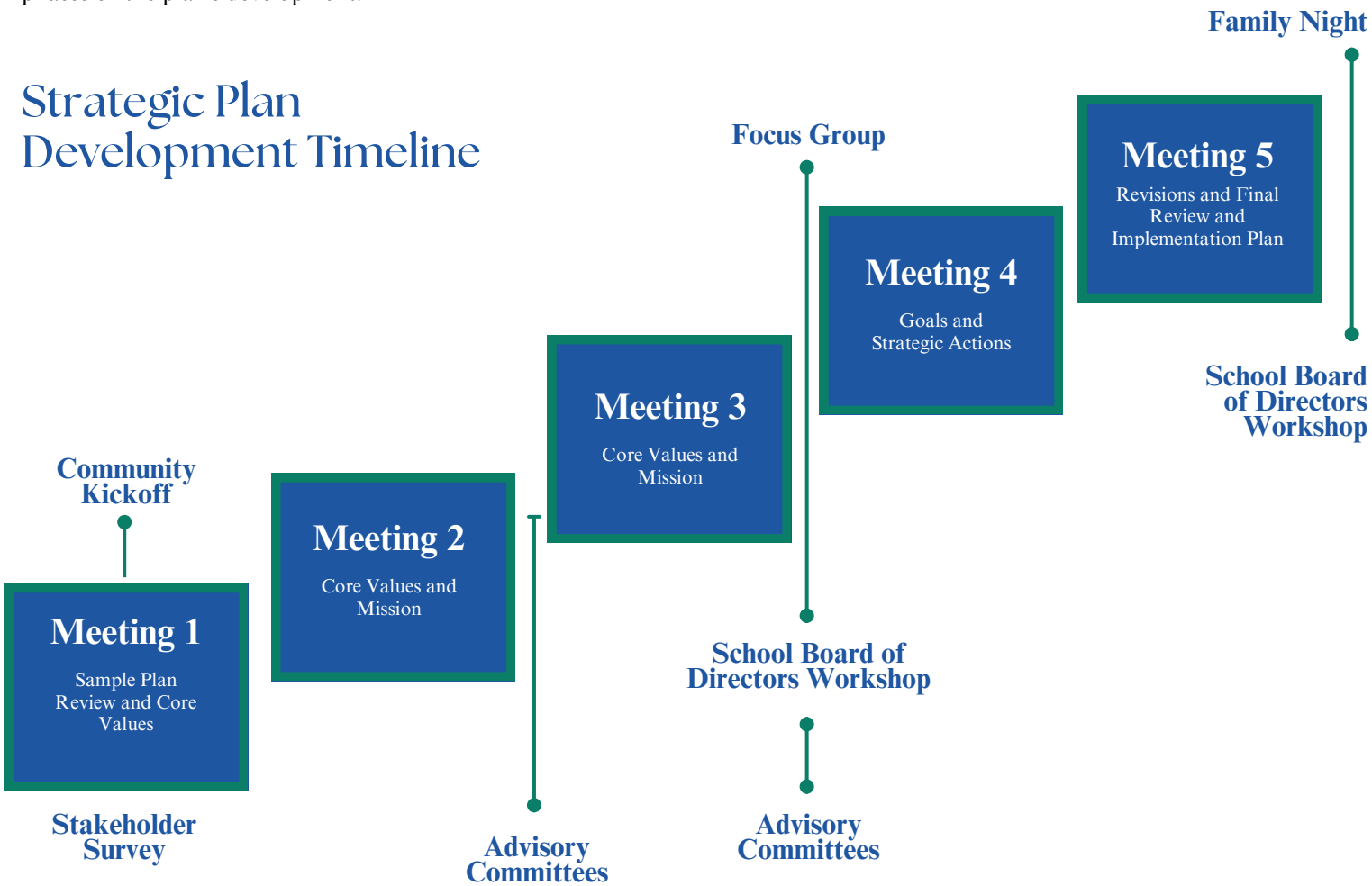
Dr. Birks was formally appointed as Superintendent in March 2023, initiating Phase II, which focused on convening cross-functional planning teams to develop a 5-year Strategic Plan that will guide the District through a process of developing priorities and goals to bring clear focus to the organization.

Strategic Planning Process

At the start of the 2023-2024 school year, the Allentown School District issued a Request for Proposal to partner with an outside organization to facilitate the development of a Strategic Plan. The District selected Insight Education Group, which was board-approved on October 12, 2023. A Kick-Off event was held in November, and the Steering Committee began to meet monthly commencing in December 2023 through May 2024.

The community's contributions and dedication have been instrumental in developing this plan, and we are incredibly grateful to everyone who participated in the comprehensive stakeholder engagement process. The timeline below outlined not only when the Steering Committee met, but how other broad-based stakeholder engagement was created throughout different phases of the plan's development.

Strategic Plan Development Timeline



Stakeholder Engagement

The development process prioritized creating a Strategic Plan that reflected the needs and voices of our entire learning community. Over the course of six months, more than 5,000 members of our Learning Community completed surveys or participated in various focus groups and advisory committees that collaborated with student and community needs in mind.



Allentown SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mission

The mission of the Allentown School District is to serve the diverse educational needs of each student, by igniting their passion for learning and creating an academic culture.

Vision

The Allentown School District envisions a learning community that increases student achievement by cultivating positive relationships, offering rigorous and meaningful curricula, and by empowering the Allentown community.

Core Values

To support students in achieving academic excellence and attaining a bright future beyond graduation, we must align our actions and mindsets in order to become a learning community committed to these core values:

Collaboration

Cultivating students, staff, families, and community engagement and recognizing that we get better together and all of our strengths are needed.

Empowerment

Equipping stakeholders to help students reach their full potential by providing them with the encouragement, resources, support, and opportunities they need to excel.

Innovation

Fostering innovation among our staff to design learning experiences and environments that promote a culture of curiosity, creativity, and future readiness.

Integrity

Building trust and accountability through honest and transparent communication within our learning community.

Respect

Creating the conditions for a positive and welcoming culture where everyone feels safe, valued, empowered, and loved.

Theory of Action

Allentown School District's Theory of Action is rooted in the understanding of the current strengths, areas of improvement, opportunities, and assets that exist in our schools in order to improve District and school improvement efforts. It is our responsibility to leverage the assets and to improve learning, teaching, and leading to bring about positive change and outcomes for our students.

If We

Create a shared vision of excellent learning and teaching

Provide adequate and differentiated resources, including partnerships responsive to the identified needs of students and adults

Build our own muscle to monitor for consistent implementation

Model best practices in professional development/capacity building through onsite professional learning and coaching

Then

We will reduce variability in learning outcomes, accelerate progress, and increase academic performance for all students

So That

Every student will attain the skills, knowledge, and tools to succeed in college, career and life

Portrait of a Learner Who Cares

To ensure that all Allentown students are prepared for the shifting dynamics of life beyond graduation, we are committed to high academic expectations and to supporting students' growth. By doing this, we will guarantee they all develop these qualities and become Critical-Thinkers, Adaptive and Analytical Learners, Resilient Visionaries, Empathetic Advocates, Servant Leaders (CARES).

C

Critical-Thinkers

Our students are high-level thinkers who approach learning with curiosity, question assumptions, and develop well-reasoned and creative approaches to problem-solving.

A

Adaptive and Analytical Learners

Our students are flexible learners who approach challenges with a growth mindset and persevere to find opportunities to learn and grow. These learners are tenacious in their quest for answers, seeking to understand and to substantiate truth.

R

Resilient Visionaries

Our students embody resilience and vision, demonstrating reflection and determination. They employ innovative approaches and unwavering resolve to new pathways for groundbreaking ideas.

E

Empathetic Advocates

Our students are advocates who actively listen and foster respect, allowing them to understand and appreciate different perspectives. These students critique social in and speak out against injustice.

S

Servant Leaders

Our students are leaders who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to actively engage and invest in building a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their community.



Our Commitments

At the heart of our 2024–2030 Strategic Plan is a deep commitment to student achievement and district-wide excellence. We believe continuous improvement stems from reflective practice, data-informed decision-making, and intentional efforts to remove barriers to learning. Our focus is on cultivating effective learning environments where every student is supported, challenged, and prepared for success in college, career, and life.

As a District, we are committed to the following priorities:

Priority	Our Commitments
Academic Excellence	Access to a strong academic foundation equips students with the capacity to unlock their full potential, actively contribute to society, and overcome obstacles that may hinder their success. Through a commitment to academic excellence and high-quality teaching and instructional best practices, we strive to close opportunity and learning gaps so that all students receive the support they need to excel now and in the future.
Safety & Whole Child Development	Each student, regardless of background, deserves to flourish in a learning environment that prioritizes whole well-being, encompassing social, emotional, behavioral, and mental aspects, alongside academic success. By seamlessly integrating continuous, holistic student support systems and cultivating a positive, safe, and accepting school culture, we aim to create opportunities for all students to achieve success in school and beyond.
Creating Pathways for Tomorrow	We aim to facilitate forward-thinking opportunities for students that align with their individual strengths, needs, and future goals. These possibilities will consider students' lived experiences and help them embrace a world of opportunity, empowering all students to learn and lead in their chosen path. Original and imaginative experiences expand the ways in which students discover meaning, unlock their full potential, and thrive in society.
Empowering Families: Strengthening Partnerships	We are committed to fostering strong, trust-based relationships with families and encouraging active engagement from the broader community in our students' education. By maintaining open, transparent communication and creating meaningful opportunities for involvement, we will deepen support for students, strengthen school communities, and ensure that families are valued partners in every child's learning journey.
Exceptional Workforce: Talent Management & Development	We seek to attract and retain highly qualified and motivated staff who are dedicated to student success. We support professional growth and development to ensure instructional practices are aligned with research, educational best practices, and high expectations for all learners.
Organizational Efficiencies & Effectiveness	We will focus on eliminating barriers and creating efficient systems that support the success of all members of our learning community. Our commitment to organizational excellence will be grounded in fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement. By establishing common beliefs, structures, and practices, we will ensure that our actions uplift and benefit all stakeholders.
Technology for Universal Learning	Technology plays a key role in enhancing access to educational resources. Modern learning environments provide students with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning journeys and develop essential skills for their future. Schools will bridge the gap for students experiencing challenges to technology access by providing modern learning environments with devices and internet connectivity, supporting equal access to education.

Priorities & Goals

Priority 1

Academic Excellence

Design and implement high-impact learning experiences to drive academic excellence.

Goal 1: Third Grade Reading - Increase Literacy proficiency in grade three.

Goal 2: Algebra I – Increase the percentage of students passing Algebra I by ninth grade.

Goal 3: Graduation Rates – Increase graduation rates.

Goal 4: The percentage of students who attend 90 percent or more school days will increase each year, reducing chronic absenteeism.

Priority 2

Safety & Whole Child Development

Cultivate conditions where all students feel safe, valued, empowered, and loved.

Goal 1: Cultivate a positive District-wide culture by establishing safe and nurturing learning communities that create conditions for student success.

Goal 2: Ensure the physical environment and infrastructure foster safe and secure learning environments where instructional excellence can thrive.

Goal 3: Partner with families, students, and community to promote, apply, and access strategies and resources to support physical, social, and mental wellness.

Goal 4: Empower student voice and expression to increase engagement, foster a sense of ownership over learning.

Priority 3

Creating Pathways for Tomorrow

Create innovative experiences and opportunities for students.

Goal 1: Develop theme-based schools focusing on educational experiences, encouraging students to connect learning to their interests, and real-world applications.

Goal 2: Increase opportunities for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12 to participate in forward-thinking and enriching activities that enhance student learning.

Priority 4

Empowering Families: Strengthening Partnerships

Foster collaborative partnerships with students, families, and the community.

Goal 1: Transform community engagement by cultivating and expanding opportunities for communication, collaboration, and connection among families, students, schools, and partners.

Goal 2: Increase family participation in District and school activities by implementing targeted outreach programs, enhancing communication channels, and providing engagement opportunities that cater to the needs and interests of all families.

Goal 3: Empower family, voice, and expression to increase engagement and foster a sense of ownership over their student's learning.

Priority 5

Exceptional Workforce: Talent Management & Development

Develop the workforce for superior performance

Goal 1: Increase the percentage of highly qualified and certified educators in teaching and leadership positions across the District to reflect the demographics of the Allentown School District's community.

Goal 2: Increase the professional learning and growth opportunities for staff in all positions across the District.

Goal 3: Increase retention rates of instructional and non-instructional staff members across the District.

Priority 6

Organizational Efficiencies & Effectiveness

Enhance organizational efficiency & effectiveness

Goal 1: Develop and maintain fiscal sustainability through strategic resource allocation to maximize student achievement.

Goal 2: Develop a data-driven facilities investment plan based on the facilities evaluation, projected enrollment trends, and alignment with the District's strategic learning goals which prioritizes renovations, maintenance, or potential consolidation.

Goal 3: Build and enhance two-way communication that is timely and culturally responsive for all stakeholders.

Goal 4: Design, implement, and maintain operational systems to enhance organizational efficiency, ensuring that the Central Office delivers exceptional service to schools, staff, and families.

Priority 7

Technology for Universal Learning

Develop and expand modern learning environments for students & staff

Goal 1: Align district fiscal and human capital to enhance state-of-the-art technology, materials, and resources.

Goal 2: Provide students and staff with meaningful experiences in emergent and generative technologies to create modern learning environments.

Goal 3: Create a culture where student voice is reinforced as students grow from informed consumers to producers and game-changers with technology.



Priority 1: Academic Excellence

Design and implement high-impact learning experiences to drive academic excellence.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District is committed to providing a robust academic foundation that provides students with the necessary skills to think critically. These critical thinking skills are essential for thriving in post-secondary endeavors, including college, career, and lifelong learning. With this foundation, students are empowered to actively engage in their communities.

Our Commitment

Access to a strong academic foundation equips students with the capacity to unlock their full potential, actively contribute to society, and overcome obstacles that may hinder their success. Through a commitment to academic excellence and high-quality teaching and instructional best practices, we strive to close opportunity and learning gaps so that all students receive the support they need to excel now and in the future.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

Quarterly benchmark data; end-of-unit assessments, chronic absence rates and average daily attendance, state assessments, informal and formal observations and feedback data, grade and content group agendas and minutes, problems of practice and action plans, quarterly grades.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Third Grade Reading - Increase Literacy proficiency in grade 3.	Empower students to develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills for a real-world purpose, using their voices to tackle important issues outside the classroom.
	Invest in training and development for Parent-Teacher Team Meetings to foster early literacy and foundational skills growth.
	Provide support to parents and students on how to use District-purchased online adaptive programming outside of school hours to enrich and reinforce the literacy skills students are developing in school.
	Effectively deliver structured literacy instruction in Pre-Kindergarten through grade three, emphasizing foundational skills.
Goal 2: Algebra I – Increase the percentage of students passing Algebra I by 9th grade.	Provide students in grades K-8 with a solid foundation of arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) with whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. This includes fluency and understanding of the order of operations.
	Implement assessments throughout K-8 to identify students who might struggle with Algebra 1 concepts. Provide targeted interventions and support for these students so that they are prepared for success in Algebra 1 by grade 9.
	Develop staff and students' capacity to understand and use the Standard for Mathematical Practices and apply it to problem-solving in real-world experiences.
	Use mathematics literacy and real-world experience to improve understanding and application of Algebra 1 concepts.
	Incorporate Instructional Rounds and School Quality Reviews to improve teaching and learning systematically. Engage teachers, school leaders, and District leaders to improve instruction in schools, networks, and systems.
	Formulate comprehensive scaling to create an influential system-wide data culture. Use Data Wise, a collaborative, eight-step framework to systematically enhance learning and teaching through data-driven analysis and continuous improvement.
Goal 3: Graduation Rates – Increase graduation rates.	Expand access to rigorous coursework and increase enrollment in programs such as Advanced Placement, dual enrollment and early college, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and non-CTE career pathways. Provide sufficient preparation and support for students' success.
	Embed Career Education and Work Standards in English/English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies curricula to prepare students with essential skills, competencies, and knowledge that employers are seeking. The skill and expertise will help students understand the practical application of their academic studies in real-world settings and make learning more relevant and engaging.
	Establish a system that includes a structured database to develop, monitor, and support effective student success plans. Implement data collection processes to monitor student achievements and progress toward graduation credit, such as Act 158 evidence; Advanced Placement, PSAT/SAT, NIMS, and NOCTI participation and performance; credentials; and other post-secondary plans.
	Develop an academic strategy aligned with PA Core and Common Core Standards, using quality curriculum, core materials, and evidence-based instructional practices, pedagogy, and methodology.
	Develop Professional Learning Communities to enable leaders and teachers to collaborate systematically to enhance teaching and learning through data-driven analysis. Empower educators through a Cycle of Continuous Improvement to improve their knowledge, skills, and practices to create positive and conducive learning environments that prioritize all learners.
Goal 4: The percentage of students who attend 90% or more school days will increase each year, reducing chronic absenteeism.	Implement an evidenced-based, Multi-Tiered System of Support framework for students and their families to improve regular attendance and provide additional resources for students at risk of chronic absenteeism.
	Train parents, students, and school staff on how to utilize the attendance feature of the District's student information system to regularly track student school attendance percentages.



Priority 2: Safety & Whole Child Development

Cultivate conditions where all students feel safe, valued, empowered, and loved.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District knows that when we nurture the whole child, we go beyond academics, focusing on physical and mental well-being, social-emotional tools and safe learning environments. This approach fosters a sense of community and provides students with the interpersonal skills crucial for lifelong success and responsible citizenship.

Our Commitment

Each student, regardless of background, deserves to flourish in a learning environment that prioritizes whole well-being, encompassing social, emotional, behavioral, and mental aspects, alongside academic success. By seamlessly integrating continuous, holistic student support systems and cultivating a positive, safe, and accepting school culture, we aim to create opportunities for all students to achieve success in school and beyond.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

District and school implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support to monitor attendance, climate data, quarterly grades, engage referrals through participation in services/activities, attendance, student progress monitoring.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Cultivate a positive District-wide culture by establishing safe and nurturing learning communities that create conditions for student success.	Implement an evidenced-based Multi-Tiered System of Support framework to create a high-quality learning environment for all students.
	Develop a Whole-Child Framework guided by evidence-based models, including physical, academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and attendance intervention strategies.
	Create a universal mental health identification and referral process that is clearly communicated with students, staff, and families.
	Implement restorative approaches throughout the learning community to promote positive interactions and repair relationships, enhancing the school climate.
Goal 2: Ensure the physical environment and infrastructure foster safe and secure learning environments where instructional excellence can thrive.	Review and revise all hazard and crisis response plans to align with best practices, preparing the District to manage emergency and crisis situations.
	Establish protocols for continuous assessment of District resources and practices that are aligned with ensuring safe campuses.
	Expand partnerships with local, state, and federal emergency response agencies to strengthen the district's capacity to manage critical incidents.
Goal 3: Partner with families, students, and community to promote, apply, and access strategies and resources to support physical, social, and mental wellness.	Develop, communicate, & monitor systems of engagement with community partners to maximize services and support for students.
	Provide wellness resources that are readily accessible and available in multiple languages and across various communication platforms to promote opportunity and facilitate increased engagement with these supports.
	Incorporate universal mental health education and awareness for students into school events such as assemblies, wellness fairs, and workshops to diminish stigma and increase knowledge of mental health supports.
	Leverage the expertise of the District's Mental Health Task Force to guide the development of the Whole Child Framework and tiered system of Mental Health Supports.
	Coordinate and deliver learning opportunities for families, such as workshops, seminars, and informational sessions to foster their involvement in the development of overall student wellness.
	Expand relationships with community organizations and agencies to broaden access to physical and mental health resources and services for students and families beyond the school setting.
Goal 4: Empower student voice and expression to increase engagement, foster a sense of ownership over learning, and create a high-quality learning environment for all students.	Create student advisory groups to recognize and amplify student voices as an impactful stakeholder in decision-making.
	Create an environment where students can freely voice their opinions and contribute to the improvement of the District. Foster a learning community where every voice is heard and valued, thereby empowering students to actively contribute to the continuous improvement of their educational experience.



Priority 3: Creating Pathways for Tomorrow

Create cutting-edge experiences and opportunities for students.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District prioritizes providing students with real-world experiences, transferable skills, and foundational knowledge to navigate our dynamic world. Fostering student success beyond high school requires access to experiences for all students so graduates are prepared for their future–college, skilled trades, military, or career–and can imagine how to participate in an evolving global community.

Our Commitment

We aim to facilitate forward-thinking opportunities for students that align with their individual strengths, needs, and future goals. These possibilities will consider students' lived experiences and help them embrace a world of opportunity, empowering all students to learn and lead in their chosen path. Original and imaginative experiences expand the ways in which students discover meaning, unlock their full potential, and thrive in society.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

The number of created specialty schools, business partnerships, and students engaged in internships, specialized programs, and course offerings.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Develop theme-based schools focusing on educational experiences, encouraging students to connect learning to their interests, and real-world applications.	Develop a system to engage the community, families, and students of grades Pre-Kindergarten through twelve in developing specialty schools aligned to interests, workforce needs, and career pathways.
	Tailor curriculum for each specialty school, embedding project-based learning, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary instructional approaches.
	Formulate marketing and recruitment plans that ensure sustainability and continuity of specialty schools and programs, attracting student populations, fostering long-term community support, and enhancing the overall educational landscape.
	Develop career immersion programs, such as job shadowing, mentorship, and industry tours, to give students hands-on experience in various fields. Partner with local employers to offer internships and apprenticeships that provide valuable skills and networking opportunities and offer access to micro-credentials aligned to pathways and areas of interest.
Goal 2: Increase opportunities for students in grades PreKindergarten through 12 to participate in forward-thinking and enriching activities that enhance student learning.	Promote and increase participation in enrichment activities, such as educational field trips, extended learning opportunities, and service-learning experiences that support the local community.
	Enhance the Program of Studies for grades 6-12 to include career pathways, student interests, and postsecondary readiness to meet graduation requirements and reflect school themes.
	Strengthen the articulation of high-quality fine arts education to cultivate and nurture students' talents and passions, ensuring experiences that support their personal and artistic growth.
	Promote and disseminate information to families about District and community partner offerings of after-school and summer extended learning opportunities for students in the learning community.





Priority 4: Empowering Families: Strengthening Partnerships

Foster collaborative partnerships with students, families, and the community.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District recognizes that student success is a shared endeavor. We strive to cultivate meaningful partnerships with families and the community, creating a collaborative network where families, community members, and educators work together to leverage each other's strengths and create a supportive learning environment beyond the classroom walls. Through increasing student agency and encouraging open communication with families, we will shift the school culture to encourage different perspectives and to provide students with the comprehensive resources they need to thrive.

Our Commitment

We are committed to fostering strong, trust-based relationships with families and encouraging active engagement from the broader community in our students' education. By maintaining open, transparent communication and creating meaningful opportunities for involvement, we will deepen support for students, strengthen school communities, and ensure that families are valued partners in every child's learning journey.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

Participation rates over time with family and community events, responses to surveys or feedback forms, social media interactions and online engagement, ongoing involvement in decision-making processes.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Transform community engagement by cultivating and expanding opportunities for communication, collaboration, and connection among families, students, schools, and partners.	Establish a Family and Community Resource Center to provide assistance and resources regarding education, health, and employment opportunities.
	Organize an Office of Interpretation & Translation to improve engagement with multilingual families, providing increased translation, and interpretation services in their preferred language.
	Adopt District policies targeting the engagement of the community and advisory councils to gain insight, provide feedback, and make recommendations to the District regarding initiatives and priorities.
	Create a database of all District partnerships, contacts, and their alignment to the Strategic Plan, and collaborate with entities that can provide specific, targeted services to help accomplish the Allentown School District's goals.
	Collaborate with the Superintendent's Interfaith Advisory Council leaders to expand understanding of District goals among students and families.
	Establish an Office of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations to maintain a database for external partner relationships.
	Develop a Parent University to support the continuation of learning at home and provide resources to parents about educational best practices and District initiatives.
	Develop a marketing and recruitment plan that ensures the sustainability and continuity of theme-based schools and programs, attracting student populations, fostering long-term community support, and enhancing the overall educational landscape.
	Leverage community partners to provide the latest opportunities that support real-world knowledge acquisition.
Goal 2: Increase family participation in District and school activities by implementing targeted outreach programs, enhancing communication channels, and providing engagement opportunities that cater to the needs and interests of all families.	Establish and maintain Parent Teacher Organizations at all schools.
	Strengthen communication systems between home and school to share information regarding school programs and students' academic progress.
	Transform all schools into Community Schools.
	Implement a system by which parents who wish to volunteer in their child's school can gain the necessary state and federal safety clearances with the help of District personnel.
	Deploy parent liaisons and partners with the Office of Family and Community Engagement to help families and community members become more engaged in the school community.
Goal 3: Empower family and voice and expression to increase engagement, foster a sense of ownership over their student's learning, and to create a high-quality learning community for all students.	Leverage family advisory groups to recognize and amplify family voices as impactful stakeholders in the decision-making process.
	Establish and train a School Governance Council at each school consisting of community members, families, and teachers who will work together to assist in achieving the mission and vision.
	Leverage the School Governance Councils to provide guidance and advice on the engagement of families and the community at the school and District level.
	Promote a communication platform where families can voice their opinions and concerns freely, fostering an environment where every voice is heard and valued, thereby empowering families to actively contribute to the continuous improvement of their student's educational experience.
	Establish a program for connecting with families and caregivers of Allentown children from birth to Pre-Kindergarten so that we can help families become their child's first and best teacher through the development of understandings of effective practices related to early childhood education.
	Implement a robust model of customer service to increase family satisfaction.



Priority 5: Exceptional Workforce: Talent Management & Development

Develop the workforce for superior performance.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District strives to be a workplace that attracts highly qualified individuals rich in experience and unique perspectives who value collaborative learning. We prioritize investing in the professional development of all of our team members, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to strengthen their skills and continue to grow in their capacity to be in service of the instructional core.

Our Commitment

We seek to attract and retain highly qualified and motivated staff who are dedicated to student success. We support professional growth and development to ensure instructional practices are aligned with research, educational best practices, and high expectations for all learners.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

Annual retention rates by school with demographic breakdown; exit surveys and interview feedback; staff conditions surveys; data on the number of individuals enrolled in teacher pipeline programs; the number of individuals enrolled in leadership pipelines; the number of highly qualified teachers, the demographics of our highly qualified the number of applicants by position, posting, and staff participation in professional development opportunities.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Increase the percentage of highly qualified and certified educators in teaching and leadership positions across the District to reflect the demographics of the Allentown School District's community.	Develop and implement a multi-year plan to increase middle school and high school pathway programs that are geared towards increasing the number of future educators.
	Develop and execute a strategic recruiting and marketing plan to generate interest, create awareness, and attract high-quality applicants to the Allentown School District.
	Enhance and increase participation in programs that allow current non-certified staff to further their education, including obtaining teaching certificates, with an emphasis on recruiting educators of color.
	Develop partnerships with international institutions of higher education, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, colleges/universities, and recruitment firms to increase exposure and attract high-quality educators.
	Develop pathways and supports for parents of District students to gain the qualifications needed for employment in various District positions.
	Strengthen partnerships with local colleges and universities to increase the number of practicum and student teachers.
Goal 2: Increase the professional learning and growth opportunities for staff in all positions across the District.	Invest in teacher development and provide time and protocols for peer collaboration to enhance instructional effectiveness for long-term success.
	Create pathways for teachers and staff to advance their careers within the District through credential, certificate, credit acquisition, mentorship, and leadership programs.
	Establish Individualized Leadership Plans to promote personal growth and encourage every Allentown School District employee to cultivate and develop leadership qualities.
	Ensure new teachers participate in a comprehensive, rigorous induction program with mentorship and ongoing professional learning.
Goal 3: Increase retention rates of instructional and non-instructional staff members across the District.	Develop and implement a plan to improve the climate and culture for staff across all schools and departments.
	Systematize the use of climate surveys and exit interviews to identify trends that can be positively impacted to improve retention rates.
	Establish competitive salary schedules across all employee groups.
	Develop and implement a social-emotional and mental health wellness support system for all staff.
	Explore ways to incentivize staff to stay, with a particular emphasis on hard-to-fill positions and vacancies across all schools.
	Create staff recognition programs centered around criteria that highlight effective instructional practices and staff commitment.
	Provide a structured and supportive onboarding experience that fosters a sense of belonging, clarity, and professional growth from the first day of employment.
	Provide staff with opportunities to actively contribute to the continuous improvement of the learning community.



Priority 6: Organizational Efficiencies & Effectiveness

Enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District strives to enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness by continually improving central office operations, providing transparent communication, and monitoring, evaluating and building upon systems in place. It is imperative that District operations support a positive customer service experience for all staff, students and families.

Our Commitment

We will focus on eliminating barriers and creating efficient systems that support the success of all members of our learning community. Our commitment to organizational excellence will be grounded in fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement. By establishing common beliefs, structures, and practices, we will ensure that our actions uplift and benefit all stakeholders.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

Analysis of facilities rating system data; technology replacement data and projections; annual reports of operations reviews; quarterly fiscal analysis of alignment towards strategic actions; staff, family, and community surveys; website and social media analytics; and student data showing the connection between resource allocation and impact.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Develop and maintain fiscal sustainability through strategic resource allocation to maximize student achievement.	Implement a budgeting system for all schools and departments to leverage data and allocate resources to programs that have the most significant impact on student achievement.
	Increase revenue-generating opportunities that enhance the learning experiences for all students, including a comprehensive approach to grant acquisition, increased state subsidies (transportation), corporate sponsorships, contributions, and community partnerships.
Goal 2: Develop a data-driven facilities investment plan based on the facilities evaluation, projected enrollment trends, and alignment with the District's strategic learning goals which prioritizes renovations, maintenance, or potential consolidation.	Conduct a Feasibility Study and create a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan.
	Implement a rating system to evaluate facility deficiencies throughout the Allentown School District.
	Complete annual reviews of District operations (facilities, food service, transportation, safety, security, and physical environments) to ensure efficiency.
Goal 3: Build and enhance two-way communication that is timely and culturally responsive for all stakeholders.	Develop a Strategic Communications Plan to outline how the entire District informs and engages staff, students, families, community and business leaders, and other audiences.
	Invest in a two-way Pre-Kindergarten to 12 communication platform for families where the District, all school leaders, and all teachers can increase regular communication with students and families.
	Systematize translation and interpretation requests to provide real time support to multilingual stakeholders in their preferred language.
Goal 4: Design, implement, and maintain operational systems to enhance organizational efficiency, ensuring that the Central Office delivers exceptional service to schools, staff, and families.	Implement a new Student Information System to streamline data collection and reporting, empower educators and families with timely insights into student progress, and foster a shared commitment to continuous improvement across the District.
	Invest in robust software applications to accurately monitor, streamline, and improve fiscal and human resources management.
	Increase transportation services to students by implementing more efficient routing systems.



Priority 7: Technology for Universal Learning

Develop and expand modern learning environments for students and staff.

Why Is This Urgent?

The Allentown School District will provide access to modern learning environments that leverage technology to enhance instruction, personalize learning, and foster the development of essential digital literacy skills to prepare our students for their future. Technology allows for universal approaches for learning, ensuring that all students can access the curriculum. By integrating technology into all aspects of the educational experience, we can empower our students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and creators who are ready to thrive in a digital age. Ensuring that all students have access to technology and the skills to use it effectively is crucial for closing the digital divide and promoting opportunity in education.

Our Commitment

Technology plays a key role in enhancing access to educational resources. Modern learning environments provide students with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning journeys and develop essential skills for their future. Schools will bridge the gap for students experiencing technology access challenges by providing modern learning environments with devices and internet connectivity, supporting equal access to education.

How Will We Measure Our Progress Towards These Goals?

Track device-to-student ratio disaggregated by demographics; Monitor budget allocations and spending on technology infrastructure, devices, software, and professional development. Analyze student work samples for creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Collect and analyze teacher and student reflections and demonstrations of emergent technologies; Gather feedback from stakeholders on technology access, effectiveness, and impact; Publish policies and administrative guidelines.

Goals	Strategic Actions
Goal 1: Align District fiscal andhuman capital to enhance state-of-the-art technology, materials, and resources.	Investigate, develop, and implement a sustainable budget model that addresses opportunity gaps through investments in technology infrastructure, devices, software, hardware, curriculum, resources, and training.
	Evaluate and upgrade technology infrastructure and plans for continued movement towards a 2:1 technology ratio (one at home and one at school) for students.
	Transform physical and virtual learning spaces to generate cutting-edge, student-centered environments by coordinating efforts of District departments.
	Engage the Innovation Task Force to develop a framework to update technology policies and practices given rapid technology changes.
Goal 2: Provide students and staff with meaningful experiences in emergent and generative technologies to create modern learning environments.	Leverage the expertise of the Innovation Task Force to guide the development and implementation of the use of generative technological advances in the classroom.
	Create professional learning experiences that support teachers' use of state-of-the art emergent technology to move towards engaging student-centered learning.
	Provide staff with opportunities to investigate, pilot, and measure the effectiveness of emergent technology software and hardware designed to support student outcomes and staff practices.
	Develop systems and structures for staff to collaboratively design and share technology integration approaches using current curricular materials in student-centered classroom experiences and instruction.
Goal 3: Create a culture where student voice is reinforced as students grow from informed consumers to producers and game-changers with technology.	Adopt the Future Ready Framework to fuel the mindset required for critical thinking, analysis, and learning skills required in the 21st century with best practices in leadership.
	Engage students in expanded opportunities to explore and demonstrate creative and cutting-edge approaches to learning through the use of student-centered instructional practices and technology-infused learning tasks.
	Revolutionize student learning by developing systems and structures around integrating technology to create a dynamic, personalized, and accessible educational environment that extends beyond the classroom walls.
	Establish an effective, standardized K-12 technology education curriculum across all District schools so that all students will graduate from the Allentown School District with the technology skills and capacities needed to thrive in college, technical school, the military, or a career.
	Proactively establish a robust framework of policies and administrative guidelines to govern the appropriate and effective utilization of emerging and generative technologies by students and staff, ensuring alignment with best practices and ethical considerations.

Strategic Planning Implementation

We Get Better Together! All of our Strengths are Needed!

Leading up to 2030 is our chance to transform our vision into reality. We will build this roadmap together by staying focused, disciplined, and accountable. Here are the keys to our success:

Empowering Leadership Teams

Passionate teams of educators, caregivers, and community members will champion each strategic area. They will be our guides, ensuring every step brings us closer to our goals.

Building a Sustainable Future

We will strategically allocate resources – people, funding, and time – to ensure the plan's viability. Implementation will be phased, allowing for continuous assessment and adjustments.

Open Communication & Collaboration

Transparency is key to accountability. Regular updates will flow freely to the Board, staff, students, and our entire community. We will foster ongoing dialogue and actively seek your feedback to shape informed decisions.

Our Collaborative Journey

(2024-2025 to 2029-2030)

Planning

We will create detailed blueprints with identified priority leaders and teams, resources, progress metrics, and potential challenges for each strategic action.

Launch

We will implement the actions, monitor its effectiveness closely, and refine as needed before full-scale implementation.

Implementation

With robust support in place, we will execute the action across the entire district.

Sustained Success

This is a continuous process. Constant monitoring and adjustments will ensure the long-term success of each strategy.

This is our roadmap to student success. Let us embark on this journey together!

Steering Committee Members

Committee Co-Chairs
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Commissioner Sheila Alvarado
Jennifer Aponte
Kimberly Arias*
Dr. Joanne Barnett
Anne Baum
Dr. Morcease Beasley
Dr. Ann Bieber
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*Allentown Youth Internship Corps

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Rachel Dosunmu
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Yamilett Gomez
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Cathy Martinez
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Raiza Trinidad
Sandy Williams
Andria Vargas
Staff Advisory

Staff Advisory

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Dawn Apgar
Crystal Ball
Valiann Bigatel
Matthew Bronson
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Jessica Younker

District Leadership Team

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Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer

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Deputy Superintendent, Chief of Schools

Jenna Monley
Chief Outreach Officer, Family & Community Engagement

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Jorge Delfin
Executive Director of Technology

Dr. Heidi Rochlin
Executive Director of STREAM Academy

Melissa Smith
Executive Director of Learning & Teaching

Cari Cantor
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Dr. Andrea Grannum-Mosely
Director of College & Career Readiness

Kyle Kauffman
Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology

Mark McKenzie
Director of Internal Accounts & Systems

Mark Weiss
Director of World Language & MultiLingual Services

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Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Robert Whartenby
Chief Operations Officer

Tiffany Polek
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Dr. Jodi Frankelli
Executive Director of Early Learning

William Seng
Executive Director of Human Resources

Dr. Kurt Berbaum
Director of Accountability, Assessment & Records

Dr. Robert W. Dilliplane
Director of Virtual Learning

Lisa Greitzer
Director of Newcomer Academies

Andrew Krahulik-Knapp
Director of Student Transportation

Ali Nastah
Director of Procurement

Ryan Yurchick
Director of Arts & Wellness

Dr. Michael Q. Roth
Deputy Superintendent, Special Projects

Jeffrey Cuff
Interim Chief Financial Officer

Arcelius Brickhouse
Executive Director of Instructional Leadership

Lindsey Parks
Executive Director, Institutional Advancement & Grant Development

Brian Siket
Executive Director of Special Education

Josephine Cacace
Director of Finance

Gina Giarratana
Director of Child Nutrition Services

Dr. Ramona Hollie-Major
Director of Talent Mgmt. & Recruitment

Kirk Kressly
Director of Facilities Services

Audie Torres
Director of School Choice & Enrollment

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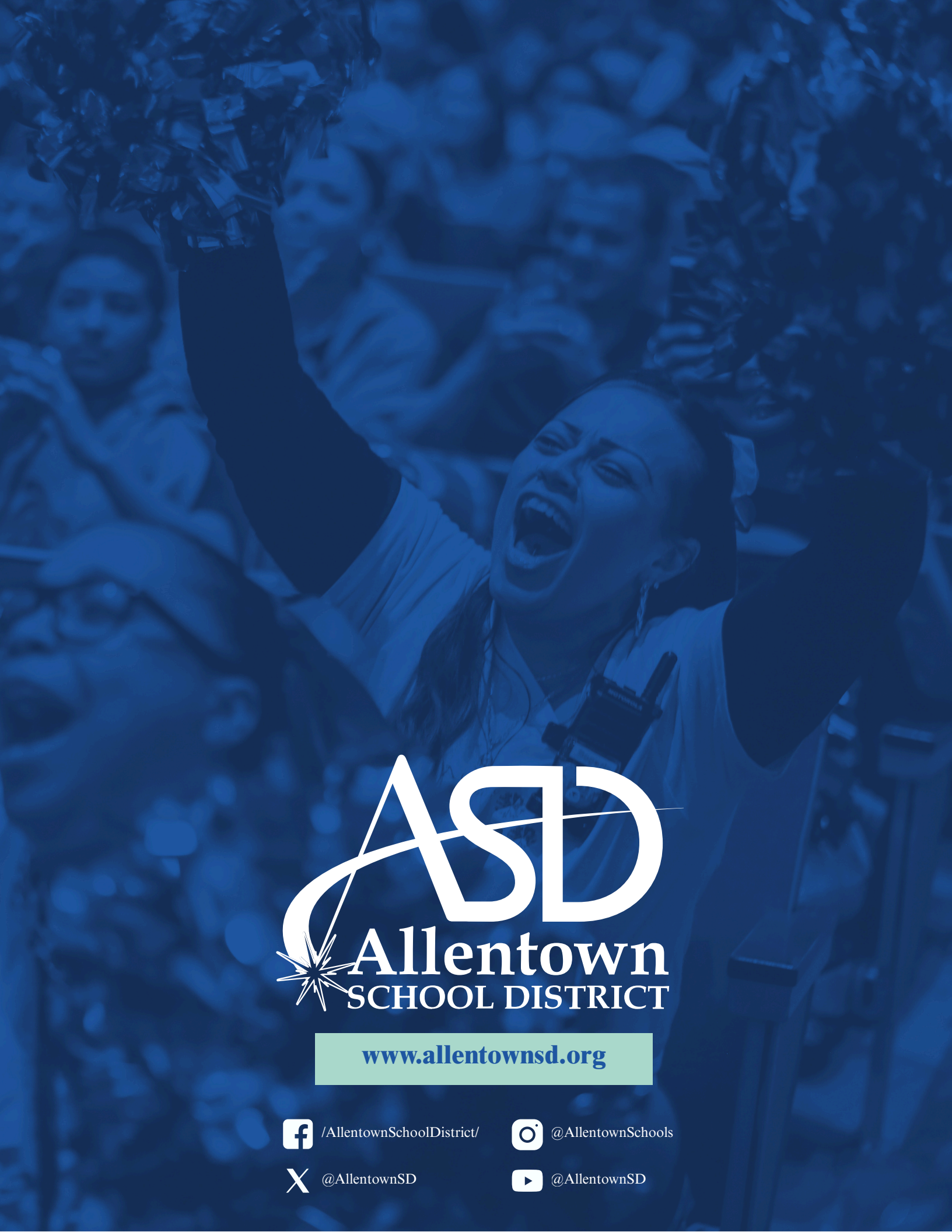
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