



FOSTER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Day in the Life Overview
Board Meeting, November 3, 2025



*Like the Phoenix
we rise, resilient
deeply rooted in **identity**
propelled by **inquiry**,
vigilant guardian of **justice**.*



Our Journey Today:

- ❖ Firm Foundation
 - Identity
 - Inquiry
 - Justice
- ❖ A Day in Life at Foster
- ❖ ACC Reimagined

Foster School Culture Aspirations



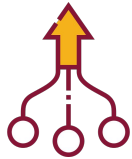
A neighborhood school that will...



Provide a unified vision across learning environments.



Build capacity of teacher teams in empowering students to work collaboratively.



Strengthen factors that contribute to school improvement and math and reading achievement.



Leverage every student's culture, language, and background as a tool for learning.

The Culture Tree: In Full Bloom



Their Future: Social Justice

- Equipped to solve problems and empowered to take action for justice

Our Curriculum: Inquiry Learning Frameworks

- Anchored Inquiry Learning
- Collaborative Teaching & Learning

Our Roots: Identity

- Guiding Principles: Nguzo Saba & Sankofa

At Foster we are Rooted in Identity

All children can learn

Growth mindset



*Future Foster
Family values*

*Lived experiences are
an asset for learning*

- **7 Core Principles of Nguzo Saba (Kwanzaa):**
The school is built on these seven principles (unity, self determination, collective work and responsibility, purpose, cooperative economics, hope, creativity) to create a strong, supportive community where everyone helps each other succeed.
- **Guiding Principle (Sankofa):**
This is the idea of "learning from the past to build a better future." The school teaches students to value and learn from history and their cultural heritage to make future wise choices.

Fortified by **Inquiry** and Equipped for **Justice**



- **Zaretta Hammond's Learning Cycle**
 - We spark curiosity and connect lessons to students' lives.
 - We teach in small steps with time to think and discuss.
 - We review often so learning sticks.
- **Inquiry Learning in Collaborative Structures:**
They will be taught *how to think* by asking their own questions, investigating answers, and solving problems collaboratively.

Coming Into Full Bloom: Our Integrated Approach



Our Structure: How We Plan

- **Vertical Grade PLCs** (teacher teams) design all learning experiences, connecting our core beliefs and frameworks to daily classroom practice.

Our Practices: What We Do

- ACC Morning Routine
- Grade Level Principles
- 5th grade Crossover Identity Project & Rituals
- Community Celebrations



A Day in the Life at Foster School

- Before School
- Math
- Literacy
- Science/ Social Science
- After School

A Day in the Life: Before School

K-2

A Warm Welcome (Before School)

- **A Confident Start:** Our doors open early to invite every student into a calm, uplifting beginning. Each child is greeted by name and welcomed by a caring adult who believes in their potential.
- **Nourish and Connect:** Students can enjoy a healthy breakfast, share conversations with friends, or engage their minds with puzzles, drawing, or a favorite book—starting the day with curiosity and connection.
- **Ready to Thrive:** This morning time ensures every child feels safe, valued, and prepared—emotionally and mentally—to step into the day with confidence and joy for learning.

3-5

Starting with Purpose (Before School)

- **A Responsible Start:** This time is a blend of calm connection and student responsibility.
- **Fuel & Focus:** Students arrive, eat breakfast, and connect with peers. Many use this time to read a book of their choice or get organized for the day.
- **Leadership in Action:** This is when student leaders prepare for their roles, whether it's the "Safety Patrol," or "Tech Buddies" getting the computers ready.

A Day in the Life: Morning Meeting (SEL)

K-2

A Confident Start

The Day Begins: Feeling Safe & Connected

- **(Bi-Monthly) Community Circle:** We come together to celebrate our cultures, cheer for one another's successes, and sing with joy. Older students lead and support the younger ones, showing that we all have something special to give and to learn. In this meeting our learning and sharing are centered on students deepening their learning of the Nguzo Saba principle focus for the year.
- **Daily Morning Meeting:** We begin each day together in a circle, where every voice matters. We sing, share our ideas, and set goals for the day—building confidence, kindness, and a sense of belonging so everyone feels ready to learn.

3-5

Starting with Purpose

The Day Begins: Setting Goals & Leading

- **(Bi-Monthly) Community Circle:** Our older students take on leadership roles. They lead the songs, share their work with younger students, and act as mentors. In this meeting our learning and sharing are centered on students learning the Nguzo Saba principle for the year.
- **Daily Morning Meeting:** We check in, review academic goals, and hold class discussions about a current goal. This builds critical thinking and communication skills.

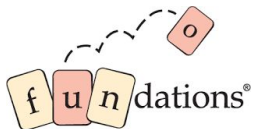


A Day in the Life: K-5 Literacy: MyView/MiVision



K-2 Foundational Skills

Learning to Love Books



GEODES

Reading Time: Finding Our Voices

- This is where the magic—and confidence—of reading begins!
- Students work in small reading groups with the teacher, building strong foundational skills step by step.
- We explore engaging stories with characters from all around the world, discovering that every voice has a story to tell.
- We play with letters and sounds, turning them into words that unlock imagination and understanding.
- We practice writing our own stories, celebrating progress and growing confidence with every page.
- Each new skill helps students feel proud, capable, and excited to share their voices as readers and writers.

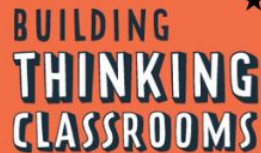
3-5

Thinking Like a Reader

Reading to Learn, Think, and Lead

- Reading becomes a powerful tool for learning, thinking, and exploring new ideas.
- Students collaborate in book clubs and strategy groups, growing their independence and confidence as readers.
- We dive into complex and diverse texts—both fiction and nonfiction—analyzing evidence, exploring big themes, and comparing perspectives from around the world.
- Reading inspires writing: students craft essays, narratives, and arguments that show their voice, insight, and creativity.
- Each new skill strengthens their ability to think critically, communicate clearly, and see themselves as capable, lifelong learners.

A Day in the Life: K-5 Math



K-2

Playing with Number

Math Time: Counting & Creating

- Math is a time to explore, ask questions, and make sense of the world.
- Students use blocks, counters, and games to learn about numbers, shapes, patterns, and how things work together.
- They talk about their thinking, work with partners, and learn to explain how they solve problems.
- Math helps children build confidence, creativity, and a love of figuring things out.

3-5

Solving Real Problems

Math Workshop: Explaining Our Thinking

- This is a "Thinking Classroom." Problems are challenging and are solved in teams at vertical whiteboards.
- The focus is less on the *answer* and more on the *strategy*. Students must be able to explain *how* they got their answer and *why* their method works.
- We use culturally relevant, real-world problems (e.g., budgeting for a community garden).

A Day in the Life: W.I.N. Time



What I Need Time (W.I.N. Time)

Phonics, Literacy, & Foundational Math

Growing Stronger

- **Phonics:** We play fun, fast-paced games to learn our letters, sounds, and "sight words."
- **Acceleration Block:** This is "just-right" time for your child. Some students play challenge games, while others get extra help from a teacher in a small group. Everyone gets what they need to grow.



What I Need Time (W.I.N. Time)

Owning Our Learning

Word Study & Acceleration: Setting Our Own Goals

- **Word Study:** Phonics grows up. Students now study word roots, prefixes, and suffixes (morphology) to unlock the meaning of complex academic words.
- **Acceleration Block:** This is flexible, data-driven time. Students work on personalized learning paths, tackle advanced enrichment projects, or get targeted support in a small strategy group.

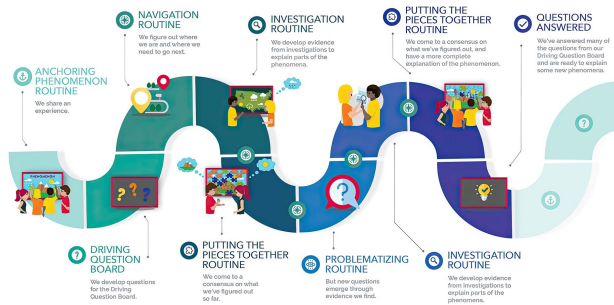
A Day in the Life: Writing, Science/ Social Science

Exploring Our World

Getting Curious & Creative!

- **Science/Social Studies:** We get to be scientists and explorers! We'll plant seeds, learn about helpers in our community, and ask "I wonder..." questions.
- **Writing Time:** We draw pictures and write stories about our families, our pets, and our favorite things.

Anchored Inquiry Learning in Science



Finding Our Voice

Inquiry, Writing & Creative Expression

- **Science/Social Studies:** We are historians and scientists. Students work on long-term inquiry projects, like researching an overlooked historical figure or designing an experiment to test a hypothesis.
- **Writing:** Students learn that writing is a tool for change. They write persuasive essays, opinion letters to the principal, and personal narratives that explore their identity.

Social Science Inquiry Framework

	Launch Launching with COMPELLING QUESTIONS...	Investigation ...moving through a RIGOROUS INVESTIGATION...	Action ...and culminating in INFORMED ACTION.
DIMENSION 1	Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts	Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
DIMENSION 2	Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	Civics Economics Geography History	Gathering and Evaluating Sources Developing Claims and Using Evidence
DIMENSION 3			Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
DIMENSION 4			Communicating Conclusions Taking Informed Action

A Day in the Life: At the End of the Day

Going Home Happy

Proud, Kind, and Curious

Your child leaves school each day:

- Feeling **PROUD** of who they are.
- Knowing how to be **KIND** to others.
- Feeling **CURIOUS** and excited to come back tomorrow!

STAND TALL.
STAND PROUD.
KNOW THAT
YOU ARE UNIQUE
AND MAGNIFICENT.
YOU DO NOT NEED
THE APPROVAL OF
OTHERS.

Closing the Day

Growing as Thinkers, Leaders, and Changemakers

Your child leaves school each day:

- Able to **THINK CRITICALLY** about the world.
- Feeling confident as a **LEADER** in their community.
- Empowered to **MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**



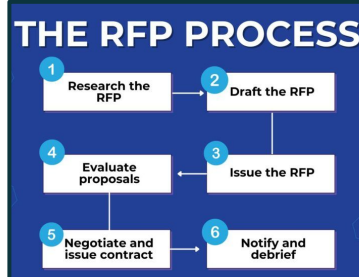
A Day in the Life: After School

Winding Down

- **A connected end to the Day:** Our after-school program extends our day with a focus on joyful, community-based learning.
- **Sample activities:**
 - a. **Snack & Share:** We gather as a group for a healthy snack and share stories from our day.
 - b. **Recess & Free Play:** Students get to run, play, and just be kids!
 - c. **Enrichment Clubs:** Students choose from fun activities like "Lego Builders," "Dance Party," "Storytelling," or "Art Studio."

Extending Our Learning

- **A Blend of Support & Enrichment:** Our after-school program is designed to support the "whole child" with a balance of academics and passion-driven activities.
- **Sample Activities:**
 - **"Power Hour":** Students have a snack, decompress, and then get focused time to complete their homework with support from staff.
 - **"Enrichment Labs":** Students sign up for high-interest labs like "Robotics Team," "Debate Club," "School Newspaper," "Art Collective," or a sports team.



Proposal Areas of Partnership Criteria

1. Ability to Expand Resources

2. Shared Ownership & True Partnership

3. Mission & Vision Alignment

4. Addressing Unique School Need

5. Connection to Core Academic Standards

6. Outcomes & Measurement

7. Collaboration with Other Partners

8. Roles & Responsibilities

9. Programs, Strategies & Actions

Proposal Submission Deadline: December 12, 2025 at 5:00 pm

Virtual Q & A Session: Friday, November 7, 2025 11:00 am

Details will be available on the District 65 website

African Centered Curriculum (ACC)

Oakton: ACC Magnet

- Students from all across the district can attend/ opt in
- One strand/ grade level throughout the school.
- Students participate in the Kwanzaa celebration

- Leverages culture
- Cultivates student identity
- Empowers self-efficacy
- Crossover Celebration
- Overlay instructional experiences before, during, & after school with African Centered Pedagogy
- District based curricular materials

Foster: ACC Reimagined

- Students within a neighborhood attendance zone
- Non-Magnet
- Built into the model of every Foster School student's experience.
- Rooted in 3 core values of Foster.
- ACC Reimagined experiences will also be present in TWI strands.

ACC Elements infused into Teaching & Learning at Foster

- ACC SEL Morning Routine
- Community Creeds & Affirmation Circles
- Multi-age group lesson opportunities
- Community Traditions, Rituals & Celebrations
- Cooperative Learning Structures

- Grade level Nguzo Saba principles
- Community annual study of Nguzo Saba theme
- Step Up Promotion Activities
- Identity Crossover experience (5th)

Our Roots: Identity

The Way of Sankofa

is an idea from the Akan tribe of Ghana that teaches that there is wisdom from learning from the past because it ensures a strong future.

SAN (return),
KO (go),
FA (look, seek and take).
Sankofa - "Go back and get it"



Learning from History-Creating Our Future: Social Justice

The Seventh Generation Principle is an Indigenous Concept, to think of the 7th generation coming after you in your words, work and actions, and to remember the seventh generation who came before you.

Inquiry Learning Frameworks: Forging Footprints in the Sand

Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino, y nada más;
caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar.
Al andar se hace camino,
y al volver la vista atrás
se ve la senda que nunca
se ha de volver a pisar.
Caminante, no hay camino,
sino estelas en la mar.

Antonio Machado

Ohayo gozaimasu
The rising sun



at the New Foster School