

History Log

Rochester (0250) Public School District - FY 2026 - SOA Plan Progress Report - Rev 0

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Date	User	Status (S) / Comment (C)	S / C
3/20/2026 10:44:05 AM	Michael Nelson	Status changed to 'LEA Superintendent / Chief Executive Approved'.	S
3/20/2026 10:02:29 AM	Sharlene Fedorowicz	Status changed to 'Application Supplement Completed'.	S
3/13/2026 1:59:40 PM	Lucy Fuller	Status changed to 'Application Supplement Started'.	S
2/5/2026 2:33:47 PM	Karen Johnston	Status changed to 'Not Started'.	S

Key Evidence-based Programs in District's SOA Plan

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Your district's SOA Plan (FY25-FY27) indicates that the evidence-based programs listed below are being prioritized and implemented in ways designed to reduce disparities in learning experiences and outcomes for those student groups experiencing them.

EBP 2.1C Comprehensive Approach to Early Literacy
EBP 2.1D Early Literacy Screening and Support

Section 1: Summary of Progress to Date (Academic Year 2025-2026)

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In this section, you will summarize:

- steps taken to launch, expand or deepen the implementation of the evidence-based programs in your SOA Plan;
- early evidence of change related to your implementation; and
- evidence of gap-closing on interim and longer-term outcomes for student groups targeted in your SOA Plan

*** Implementation Activities:** During academic year 2025-2026, what steps did your district take to launch, expand, or deepen the implementation of each EBP in your SOA Plan?

During the 2025 to 2026 school year, Rochester Public Schools continued to implement the priorities outlined in our Student Opportunity Act Plan despite receiving extremely limited SOA funding. The district remained focused on accelerating learning for High Needs students, including Low Income students, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners, by strengthening literacy instruction and maintaining a strong focus on evidence based practices.

Throughout the year we continued full implementation of our core literacy curriculum and our early literacy universal screening tool. These tools helped ensure that instruction remained aligned with the needs of our lowest performing students and allowed staff to identify learning gaps early. Teachers and interventionists used screening and progress monitoring data to adjust instruction and provide targeted support for students who required additional assistance.

A continued priority during the 2025 to 2026 school year was the use of data to guide instructional decision making. District and school teams regularly reviewed student performance data to monitor progress and identify areas where additional support was needed. This ongoing analysis allowed educators to refine instructional practices and interventions so that High Needs students received timely and focused support.

The District Literacy Leadership Team and the School Literacy Leadership Team established by Hill for Literacy continued their work and met regularly to review data, support the implementation of high quality instructional materials, and guide teachers in forming small instructional groups based on specific student needs. This work helped strengthen consistent literacy practices across classrooms and grade levels.

Supplemental materials and targeted resources continued to be used to support students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. These additional supports allowed educators to provide more intensive literacy instruction for students who required it. Professional development for staff also remained a priority so teachers could continue to refine their instructional practices and effectively use assessment data and high quality materials.

Through these efforts Rochester Public Schools continued to make steady progress toward the goals outlined in our SOA Plan. Our focus on data informed instruction, high quality instructional materials, targeted interventions, and professional learning reflects our ongoing commitment to improving outcomes and narrowing achievement gaps for our High Needs students.

*** Early evidence of change:** Please describe and reflect upon the extent to which progress monitoring data reflects early evidence of change (e.g., changes in actions, discourse, beliefs, expectations, and instructional practice) that you anticipate will ultimately lead to improved outcomes and smaller disparities in outcomes for student groups targeted in your SOA Plan?

Early evidence of change continues to emerge as we review our progress monitoring data and reflect on instructional practices across the district. Over the course of the 2025 to 2026 school year we have seen continued growth in how educators use data to guide instruction and support students who require additional help in literacy. Teachers are increasingly comfortable using screening and progress monitoring results to identify specific skill gaps and adjust instruction in response to student needs.

One of the most noticeable shifts has been the consistency with which teachers are applying the principles of the Science of Reading within the classroom. With the continued implementation of our high quality instructional materials, teachers are more intentional in their approach to early literacy instruction. Instruction is becoming more structured and focused on foundational skills, and there is greater alignment between core classroom instruction and targeted interventions.

Progress monitoring and regular data meetings have supported this work by giving teachers consistent opportunities to review student growth and determine next steps. These discussions have strengthened collaboration among classroom teachers, interventionists, and support staff. As a result, students who require additional support are being identified earlier and are receiving more focused instruction through small group intervention.

Our FLEX time structure has also continued to support this work by allowing staff to group students based on their specific literacy needs. This structure has made it easier to provide targeted support for students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 while still maintaining strong core instruction for all students. Teachers report greater confidence in their ability to respond to student needs and there is a stronger shared belief that with the right instruction and timely interventions students can make meaningful progress.

While this work is ongoing, early indicators suggest positive shifts in instructional practice, teacher collaboration, and expectations for student success. These changes are helping to build a stronger instructional foundation that we expect will continue to improve literacy outcomes and reduce achievement gaps for the High Needs student groups identified in our SOA Plan.

*** Progress in closing disparities for student groups in your district:**

Please describe and reflect upon the extent to which progress monitoring data on interim and longer-term student outcomes reflects the following:

- improvement for the student groups targeted in your SOA Plan;
- reduced disparities for student groups targeted in your SOA Plan;
- progress towards meeting targets for the lowest performing students group

Progress monitoring data from our Early Literacy Screener, DIBELS, continues to show positive trends in literacy development across our student population during the 2025 to 2026 school year. From the beginning of the year benchmark to the middle of year benchmark assessments, we again observed overall improvement in literacy performance, with an 6% increase in composite scores across the district. These results indicate steady progress in foundational reading skills and reflect the continued impact of our focus on early literacy instruction.

For our High Needs students, including Low Income students, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners, our SOA plan continues to prioritize targeted supports designed to accelerate literacy growth and reduce achievement gaps. While subgroup reporting is limited due to small cohort sizes, progress monitoring data shows that students within the High Needs category are demonstrating continued improvement. The percentage of students performing at or above benchmark increased by approximately 3 percent from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year assessment window. DIBELS Composite scores for High Needs students also increased by 3 points from the middle of year benchmark last year to the middle of year benchmark this year.

Our lowest performing students are showing gradual progress toward benchmark expectations. Students receiving targeted literacy interventions through our FLEX time structure and small group instruction have demonstrated measurable gains in early reading skills such as phonemic awareness, decoding, and fluency. Ongoing review of progress monitoring data has allowed educators to adjust instruction and interventions to better meet student needs.

Several strategies continue to support this progress. Teachers are strengthening classroom instruction aligned with Science of Reading practices. Educators meet regularly to review student data, identify students in need of additional support, and adjust instruction based on observed performance trends. The use of FLEX time allows staff to provide targeted small group instruction focused on specific literacy skill development.

While disparities between student groups remain, our progress monitoring data indicates that the gap is beginning to narrow as High Needs students demonstrate steady growth. We will continue to refine our instructional practices, maintain strong progress monitoring systems, and provide targeted supports to ensure continued progress toward improved outcomes for our lowest performing student groups.

End of year benchmark data will be available later in the spring and early summer and is not yet available for inclusion in this report.

Section 2: Key Changes to Your Plan and Next Steps in Implementation

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In this section, you will:

- describe any key changes or amendments to your district's SOA Plan *(if applicable)*; and
- briefly describe implementation plans for academic year 2026-27 to expand, deepen, and/or strengthen your implementation of the EBPs in your SOA plan *(required)*

If applicable, please describe any key changes to your district's SOA plan that your stakeholders should be aware of *(e.g., substantial shifts in your approach to EBPs in your SOA plan, significant changes to 3-year budget; dropping or adding an evidence-based program.)*

For the 2025 to 2026 school year, the district has not made any significant changes to the overall SOA plan. We will continue implementing our High Quality Instructional Materials for core literacy instruction along with the use of DIBELS as our early literacy screener.

Our focus remains on strengthening instruction aligned with the Science of Reading and using assessment and progress monitoring data to guide instruction and targeted interventions. Professional development and ongoing support for staff continue as we deepen implementation of the literacy program.

At this time there have been no significant changes to the three year budget and no evidence based programs have been added or removed. The district remains focused on continuing the work already in place to support improved literacy outcomes for all students.

* What steps will your district be taking to expand, deepen, and/or strengthen the implementation of the EBPs in its SOA Plan during the 2026-2027 school year?

During the 2025 to 2026 school year, the district will continue to expand and strengthen the implementation of the evidence based practices outlined in our Student Opportunity Act Plan through the ongoing work of our District Literacy Leadership Team and School Literacy Leadership Teams. These teams will continue to guide the implementation of our Literacy Action Plan and support consistent instructional practices across schools.

Monthly data meetings will remain an important structure for monitoring student progress and using assessment data to inform instruction and intervention. These meetings support collaborative problem solving among educators and ensure that instructional adjustments are made in a timely way to meet student needs.

As we move further into the literacy program rollout, the district has established strong routines and shared expectations that support high quality instruction. Educators have now completed the Science of Reading professional learning modules, which has strengthened alignment across Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 instruction. This shared foundation has helped deepen educators' understanding of effective literacy instruction and has increased consistency in classroom practice.

During the 2025 to 2026 school year, district and school leaders will continue to focus on strengthening these systems and ensuring that leadership teams, grade level teams, and data meetings remain focused on improving teaching and learning. This work will support continued progress in literacy instruction and ensure that all students have access to high quality literacy learning and the supports they need to be successful.

Section 3: Engaging Families/Caregivers and Other Stakeholders

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In this section, you will describe:

- new activities implemented in 2025-2026 that engage families/caregivers, particularly those representing student groups experiencing the greatest disparities, about how to best address their students' needs;
- evidence of progress to date in improving family/caregiver engagement, using the metrics in your SOA Plan (FY25-FY27);
- the ways in which your district engaged with different stakeholder groups, particularly those representing student groups experiencing disparities, throughout the 2025-2026 school year.

** Please briefly describe any new efforts introduced in academic year 25-26 to engage families/caregivers, particularly those representing the student groups you have identified for targeted support, about how to best address their students' needs.*

During the 2025 to 2026 school year, Rochester Public Schools continued to expand and strengthen family and caregiver engagement efforts, particularly for families representing our targeted student groups. Building on the foundation established through our district strategic plan, Vision2028, the district further refined its communication practices to ensure families receive clear, consistent, and accessible information about student learning and available supports.

One new effort this year was the expansion of our family learning events to include both Literacy and Math focused evenings. These events provided families with hands on opportunities to learn about instructional practices, curriculum materials, and practical strategies they can use at home to support their child's learning. Attendance included many families of Low Income students, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners, helping to strengthen partnerships between home and school.

The district also increased outreach to families of students identified through DIBELS 8 and other screening tools as needing additional support. Families received more individualized communication from teachers and specialists, along with targeted resources and strategies that can be used at home to reinforce literacy development.

In addition, Rochester Public Schools continued to offer regular opportunities for families to share feedback and participate in school decision making through School Council meetings, Title I family engagement events, PTO meetings, and SEPAC meetings. We also continued to gather family input through surveys connected to district improvement efforts and ongoing work aligned with Vision2028. These efforts have helped deepen relationships with families and ensure their voices continue to inform how we support the academic and social emotional needs of our students.

* Please share evidence of increased or improved engagement with families/caregivers, particularly those representing the student groups targeted in your SOA plan, during academic year 2025-26. *(Districts may use the metrics described in their SOA Plans, or other relevant metrics)*

During the 2025 to 2026 school year, Rochester Public Schools continued to strengthen family and caregiver engagement, particularly for the student groups identified in our Student Opportunity Act plan. Building on the structures established in previous years, the district focused on increasing participation, improving communication, and creating additional opportunities for families to engage in their children's learning and school community.

We continued to prioritize clear and consistent communication so families had access to timely information about student progress, curriculum, and available supports. Through a combination of in person events and digital communication, families had multiple ways to stay connected with schools, access resources, and share feedback. These ongoing efforts have led to increased participation in school events and continued collaboration between families and educators.

Evidence of improved engagement during the 2025 to 2026 school year includes:

Annual district family feedback surveys connected to district professional development and school improvement efforts that continue to show strong participation and valuable input from families.

Continued use of weekly SMORE newsletters and the ORRConnect app to ensure families receive regular updates, school information, and opportunities to engage with teachers and school leaders.

Ongoing monthly Special Education Parent Advisory Council meetings that provide families of Students with Disabilities with opportunities to collaborate with district staff and advocate for student needs.

Regular School Council meetings that include family representatives and provide opportunities for caregivers to participate in school level decision making.

Consistent PTO communication and events that encourage family involvement in school activities and strengthen the home school connection.

Title I family engagement nights that provide targeted resources and learning opportunities for families of High Needs students.

Literacy and Math family learning events that help caregivers better understand instructional practices and provide strategies to support learning at home.

Early literacy screening communication sent to families when students perform significantly below benchmark on DIBELS 8, ensuring caregivers are informed of results and have opportunities to discuss next steps and support with school staff.

School based book fairs that encourage families to participate in reading activities and support students in selecting books that match their interests.

These efforts continue to strengthen partnerships with families and ensure that caregivers remain active participants in supporting the academic growth and well being of all students.

* Please briefly describe the following types of stakeholder engagement during the 2025-2026 school year, making certain to include information on stakeholders representing student groups targeted in your SOA plan:

1. how your district shared updates on SOA plan implementation and early evidence of change student outcomes with different stakeholder groups
2. the ways in which your district collected input and feedback from different stakeholder groups;
3. the substantive input and feedback you have received to date—and whether/how that has impacted your SOA plan implementation

During the 2025 to 2026 school year, Rochester Public Schools continued to engage stakeholders in the ongoing implementation of our Student Opportunity Act plan and to share early evidence of student progress. Our focus remained on maintaining transparent communication, ensuring that families representing student groups identified in our SOA plan had access to information, and providing opportunities for meaningful feedback.

Questions 1 and 2: Sharing Updates and Collecting Input

The district continued to share updates on SOA plan implementation and emerging evidence of student progress through several established communication channels. The SOA plan and updated District and School Report Cards remained available on the district website so that families, caregivers, and community members could review progress toward district goals. Updates were also shared during regularly scheduled School Committee meetings, School Council meetings, and SEPAC meetings throughout the school year. These meetings provided opportunities for families, including those representing students with disabilities and early learners, to hear updates on instructional priorities, ask questions, and participate in discussions about student learning and support services.

In addition, the district continued to communicate directly with families of early elementary students through Early Literacy Letters sent twice during the school year. These letters provided updates on literacy development, described instructional supports in place, and shared strategies families could use at home. Families were encouraged to communicate with teachers and school leaders through email, phone calls, and conferences, which allowed for consistent two way communication and opportunities for feedback throughout the year.

Question 3: Substantive Input and Impact on SOA Plan

The feedback received during the 2025 to 2026 school year continued to be primarily student specific and focused on individual academic, social, or behavioral needs. Families most often used meetings and direct communication with school staff to discuss supports for their children and to better understand available services. While this feedback did not result in changes to the overall structure of the SOA plan, these conversations helped inform how supports and resources were implemented at the classroom and student level.

Stakeholder discussions continued to reinforce the importance of clear communication with families and maintaining accessible opportunities for engagement. As a result, the district has continued to prioritize regular updates, clear communication about instructional initiatives, and opportunities for families to connect with school staff as we work to support improved outcomes for all students

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Overview: The *Mass Leads Act*, enacted November 20, 2024, requires districts to develop and submit to DESE plans for strengthening workforce diversity. DESE's Office of Strategic Initiatives, which is leading this initiative, is working collaboratively with the SOA Team and other stakeholders as it develops guidance for these plans. Data collection for the FY26 SOA Plan Progress Reports is being leveraged to gather baseline data from districts on strategies fostering workplace diversity that are already underway or that are in the planning stages. will be used. Your responses to the items below will inform this planning process.

* What systemic barriers to hiring a diverse workforce does your district encounter? What steps is your district currently taking to address and eliminate those barriers?

Our district recognizes that school systems often face systemic barriers when working to diversify the educator workforce. These barriers can include limited candidate pools in certain licensure areas and traditional hiring practices that may unintentionally introduce bias. To address these challenges, our district has implemented blind interview practices by removing identifying information such as candidate names during the screening process to reduce the potential for unconscious bias. We also use a structured interview process in which all candidates are asked the same set of questions to ensure fairness and consistency in evaluation. In addition, our district participates in professional learning through the Teacher Diversity Professional Learning Community (TDPLC), which supports districts in examining hiring practices and implementing strategies that promote a more inclusive and equitable workforce.

* What steps does your district currently take to identify, recruit, and hire employees who are members of groups underrepresented in the educator workforce?

Our district is actively engaged in identifying and strengthening strategies to recruit and hire educators who are members of groups underrepresented in the educator workforce. District leaders participate in the Teacher Diversity Professional Learning Community (TDPLC), which provides guidance and resources focused on building a more diverse and effective educator pipeline. Through this work, we examine student and community needs, analyze the local talent landscape, and implement research-informed strategies to broaden recruitment efforts and reach a wider range of candidates. In addition, our district uses tools introduced through the Superintendent Leadership Conference at William James College, including the Diversity Data Diagnostic Tool and the DESE Roadmap to Teacher Diversification, to review workforce data and inform recruitment planning.

* What strategies does your district currently use to develop, promote, and retain employees who are members of groups underrepresented in the educator workforce?

Our district focuses on creating a supportive and inclusive professional environment that promotes the development and retention of all educators, including those from groups underrepresented in the workforce. Through our participation in the Teacher Diversity Professional Learning Community, district leaders engage in professional learning that highlights strategies for fostering inclusive workplace cultures, supporting educator development, and strengthening retention. We also use the Diversity Data Diagnostic Tool and the DESE Roadmap to Teacher Diversification to analyze workforce data and identify

opportunities to improve professional growth pathways and leadership opportunities. These efforts help guide our ongoing work to ensure that educators feel supported and valued within our district. We also provide New Teacher Induction and professional development to keep our workforce.

* What steps does your district currently take to promote equal opportunity in employment for educators?

Our district promotes equal opportunity in employment by implementing equitable hiring practices and engaging in continuous professional learning focused on fair and inclusive workforce development. We use structured interview protocols so that all candidates are asked the same questions and evaluated using consistent criteria. Blind screening practices are also used to reduce the potential for bias during the initial stages of the hiring process. In addition, district leaders participate in professional learning through the Teacher Diversity Professional Learning Community and utilize resources such as the Diversity Data Diagnostic Tool and the DESE Roadmap to Teacher Diversification to review hiring data and strengthen equitable practices. These efforts support our commitment to ensuring that all qualified candidates have fair access to employment opportunities within our district.

FY26 Plan Progress Report Checklist

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General Checklist Comment		
No comments have been made at this time		
Checklist Description (Collapse All) Expand All		
☐	1. The progress report is responsive to items in the progress report template and guidance.	Not Reviewed ▼
	1.01 The progress report is responsive to items in the progress report template and guidance.	
☐	2. The progress report centers on student groups identified as experiencing disparities.	Not Reviewed ▼
	2.01 The progress report centers on student groups identified as experiencing disparities.	
☐	3. Narrative throughout the progress report is asset-based and free of deficit language about students, staff, and families.	Not Reviewed ▼
	3.01 Narrative throughout the progress report is asset-based and free of deficit language about students, staff, and families.	
☐	4. Section 1: Summary of Progress to Date utilizes data disaggregated by targeted student groups to report on and meaningfully reflect upon implementation, early evidence of change, and/or outcomes.	Not Reviewed ▼
	4.01 The Summary of Progress to Date (Section 1) utilizes data disaggregated by targeted student groups to report on and meaningfully reflect upon implementation, early evidence of change, and/or outcomes.	
	4.02 Data are included in the narrative to highlight and illustrate the progress described.	