

*Building
a Better Akron*



BLUEPRINT *for Excellence*

— THE STRATEGIC PLAN —

2023 – 2028

YEAR TWO – UPDATED JANUARY 27, 2025



**Akron Public
Schools®**



MISSION

To ensure all APS scholars are college, career, and life-ready by providing innovative educational experiences.

VISION

All APS scholars will graduate as architects of their future, prepared to thrive in an ever-changing world.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

Communication

Comprehensive, two-way communication is essential to achieving a shared vision.

Culture

Every person belongs, and each person's inherent dignity is upheld.

Accountability

Fair and just outcomes for all scholars and employees.

Relevance

Develop every scholar's agency, spirit of inquiry, and joy in learning.

Relationships

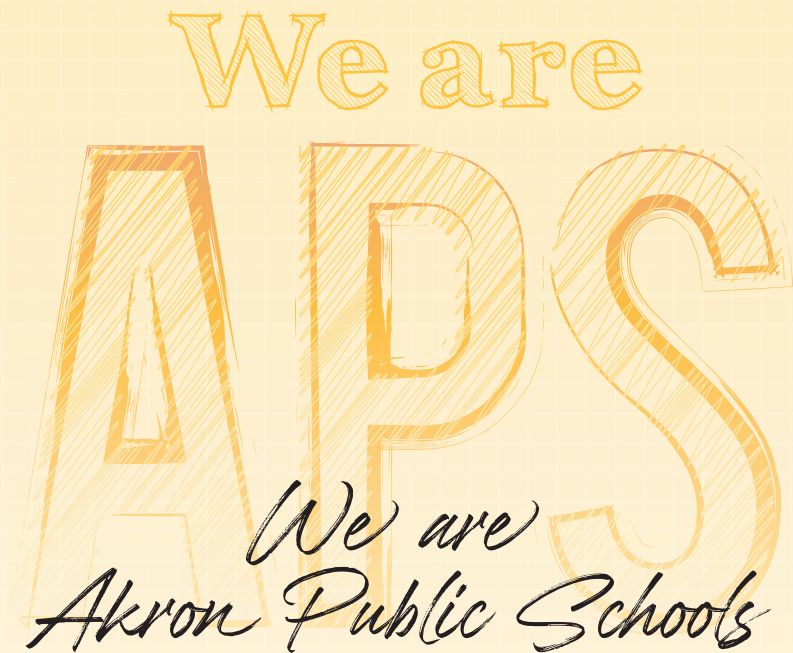
Family, community, and partners in every neighborhood shape and support our shared mission.

Trust

We earn public trust by providing high-quality services, operating transparently, and being good stewards of our resources.

Readiness

Scholars are confident in their knowledge and skills, allowing endless opportunities.



Akron Public Schools serves all students by nurturing their unique talents and interests, preparing well-rounded scholars through strong, innovative programs that ignite curiosity and support lifelong learning.

Located in Akron, Ohio, the district spans 62 square miles, educating thousands of scholars across 9 high schools, 9 middle schools, and 26 elementary schools. Akron Public Schools features state-of-the-art community learning centers, developed through a partnership with the city of Akron and the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), serving as schools by day and community centers by night and weekends.

In the arts, Akron Public Schools fosters cultural awareness, social skills, and cognitive development, recognizing the arts' role in engaging the mind and enhancing learning across disciplines.

Through the College & Career Academies of Akron (CCAA), scholars experience a unique education model that strengthens connections between classroom learning and future career pathways.

Specialty programs offer focused learning tracks, including early college, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and the arts, allowing scholars to explore specific fields of interest. APS also provides a full continuum of services to support students with disabilities, ages 3–22, delivering high-quality, free, and appropriate public education (FAPE) alongside gifted education.

With a steadfast commitment to opportunity and academic excellence, Akron Public Schools empowers every scholar to achieve their fullest potential, positioning them for a bright and impactful future.

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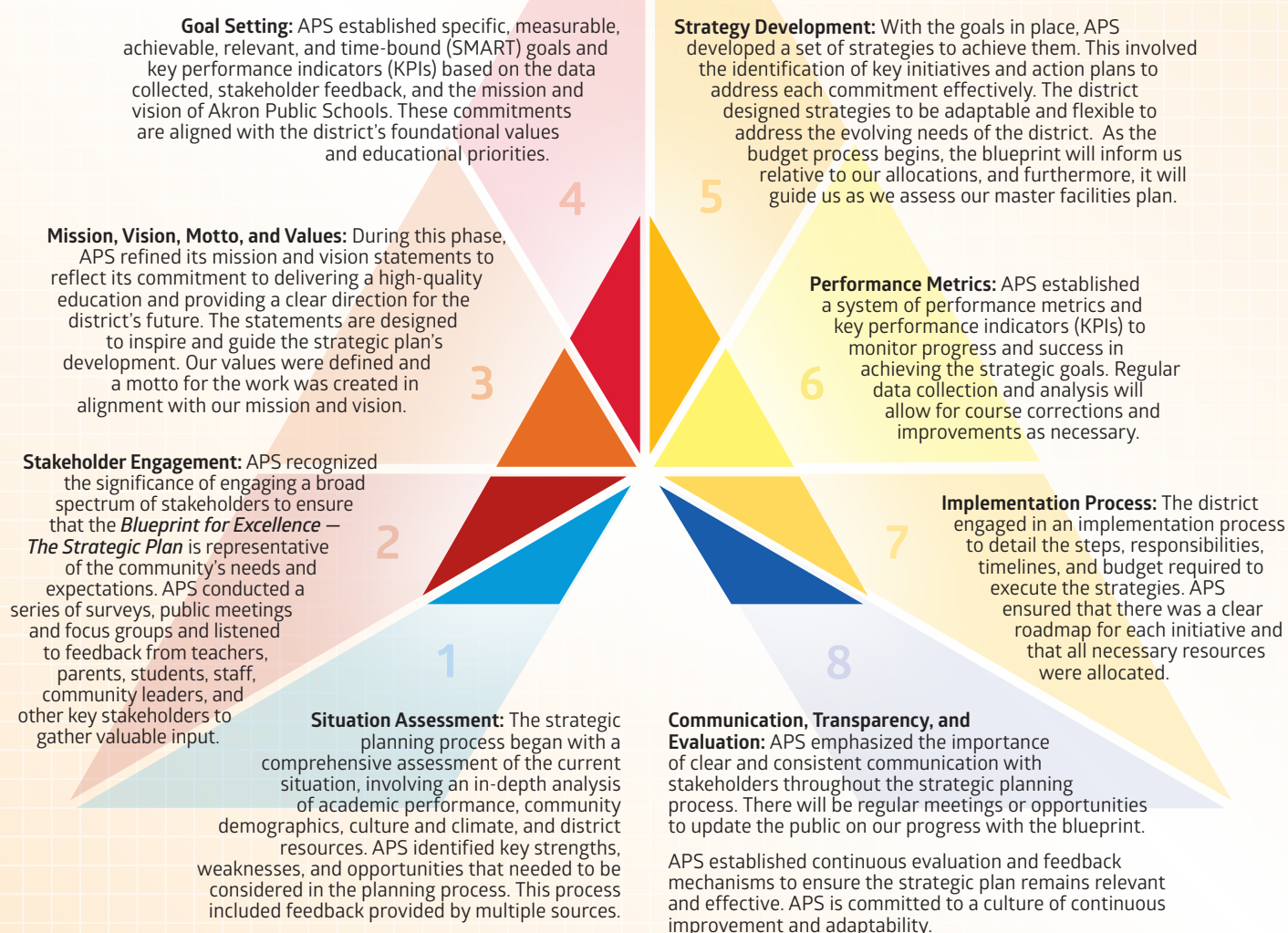
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OVERVIEW of Process

In the first year, Akron Public Schools engaged parents, students, and staff through feedback sessions, forums, and meetings to shape the strategic plan. Priorities included academic supports, mental health, and ensuring the needs of all learners are met. The district continues a rigorous planning process with stakeholder input, clear goals, and focused strategies.

This inclusive approach will continue, with a focus on gathering input from families and students to evaluate initiatives and adapt strategies. Upcoming workshops and meetings will measure progress, share updates, and strengthen our shared goals.

For more details, please visit the Akron Public Schools strategic plan website or join our upcoming community meetings to stay connected and involved.



Akron Public Schools continues a rigorous strategic planning process that involves stakeholder engagement and input, goal setting, and strategy development. The *Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan* is designed to guide APS in its quest to provide high-quality education to its scholars while remaining adaptable to changing circumstances and being fiscally responsible. By implementing this blueprint, APS is committed to achieving its vision for the future and continuing to serve the community effectively.

MESSAGE

from the Superintendent



Dear Akron Public Schools Community,

As I step into the role of superintendent for Akron Public Schools, I want to express my deep appreciation to our families, staff, and community members for your continued commitment to our students and schools. It is an honor to lead this district, and I am proud to continue the important work outlined in our ***Blueprint for Excellence – The Strategic Plan***.

Having been involved in this work, I can confidently say the ***Blueprint*** is a solid, thoughtful roadmap—one built on meaningful engagement with families, staff, students, and community partners. Together, we have established a strong foundation focused on student success, academic achievement, community connection, and operational excellence.

Over the past year, the input and partnership of our community have been invaluable. As we enter the next phase, we will continue to strengthen these partnerships, amplify the voices of our families, and provide opportunities for everyone to help shape our future.

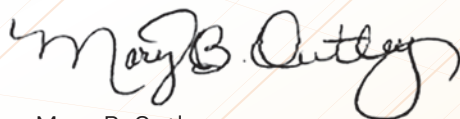
With the successful passage of the levy in the fall of 2024, we are carefully assessing district priorities to ensure we are responsible stewards of public funds. While we must continue to make difficult decisions, our focus remains on what matters most—improving academic outcomes, strengthening attendance, reducing barriers to success, and supporting the social-emotional well-being of our students.

We are also mindful of recent federal guidance regarding the use of certain terminology. While we will adjust language in some areas, our unwavering commitment remains: to meet the needs of all students, to provide the right supports, and to ensure meaningful access and opportunities for every student we serve.

I am inspired by the progress we've made and excited for the work ahead. Together, we will ensure every Akron student has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Thank you for your trust, partnership, and dedication to our schools.

Sincerely,



Mary B. Outley
Superintendent

terminology

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

Acronym

Meaning

ACT	American College Test — A standardized test used for college admissions
APS	Akron Public Schools
Baseline	A minimum or starting point used for comparisons.
CCAA	College & Career Academies of Akron
CCWMR	College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness
ELP	Early Learning Program
FY	Fiscal Year
HC	Human Capital
HPG	Harvard Proving Ground
IAT	Intervention Assistance Team
KPI	Key Performance Indicator — A measurable variable that can be tracked on a regular basis
KRA	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of supports
OIP	Ohio Improvement Process
Off Track	Scores which are below grade level
On Track	Scores which are on or above grade level
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Performance Index Score	Accounts for the level of achievement of every student based on the test score received on the state assessment
Percentage Points	The simple numerical difference between two percentages
PD	Professional Development
PLC	Professional Learning Community
Proficiency	Documented evidence that a student has met the required level of skill and knowledge set by benchmarks
OIP	Ohio Improvement Process
SEL	Social-Emotional Learning
SMART Goal	SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) Goal
SMS	Short Message Service (text messaging)
Unencumbered Cash	Unencumbered cash in a school district is money that is available to use for any purpose because it has no debts or other obligations attached to it.

STAKEHOLDERS

As we move into the second year of our *Blueprint for Excellence –The Strategic Plan*, Akron Public Schools continues to build on the foundation established in the plan's first year. Under the leadership of Dr. Michael Robinson, we have transitioned from siloed efforts to a collaborative, inclusive approach that involves our scholars, staff, and community.

In the past year, we gathered valuable input through community and staff meetings, surveys, and ongoing dialogue with various advisory groups, including the superintendent's advisory, faith-based advisory, scholar advisory, administrative advisory, and teacher advisory committees. These discussions have informed the refinement of our strategic priorities and the establishment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure our progress.

Year two is focused on maintaining momentum and continuing to adapt this living document to meet the evolving needs of our scholars, staff, and community. We remain committed to ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in the process and aligned with the plan's mission: providing access, and opportunity for every APS scholar while fostering the professional growth of our employees.

Together, we are working toward a brighter future for Akron by making this strategic vision a reality.



Theory of CHANGE

If we recruit, retain, and develop staff and deliver quality instruction, engaging experiences, and welcoming environments, then the community of Akron will thrive.

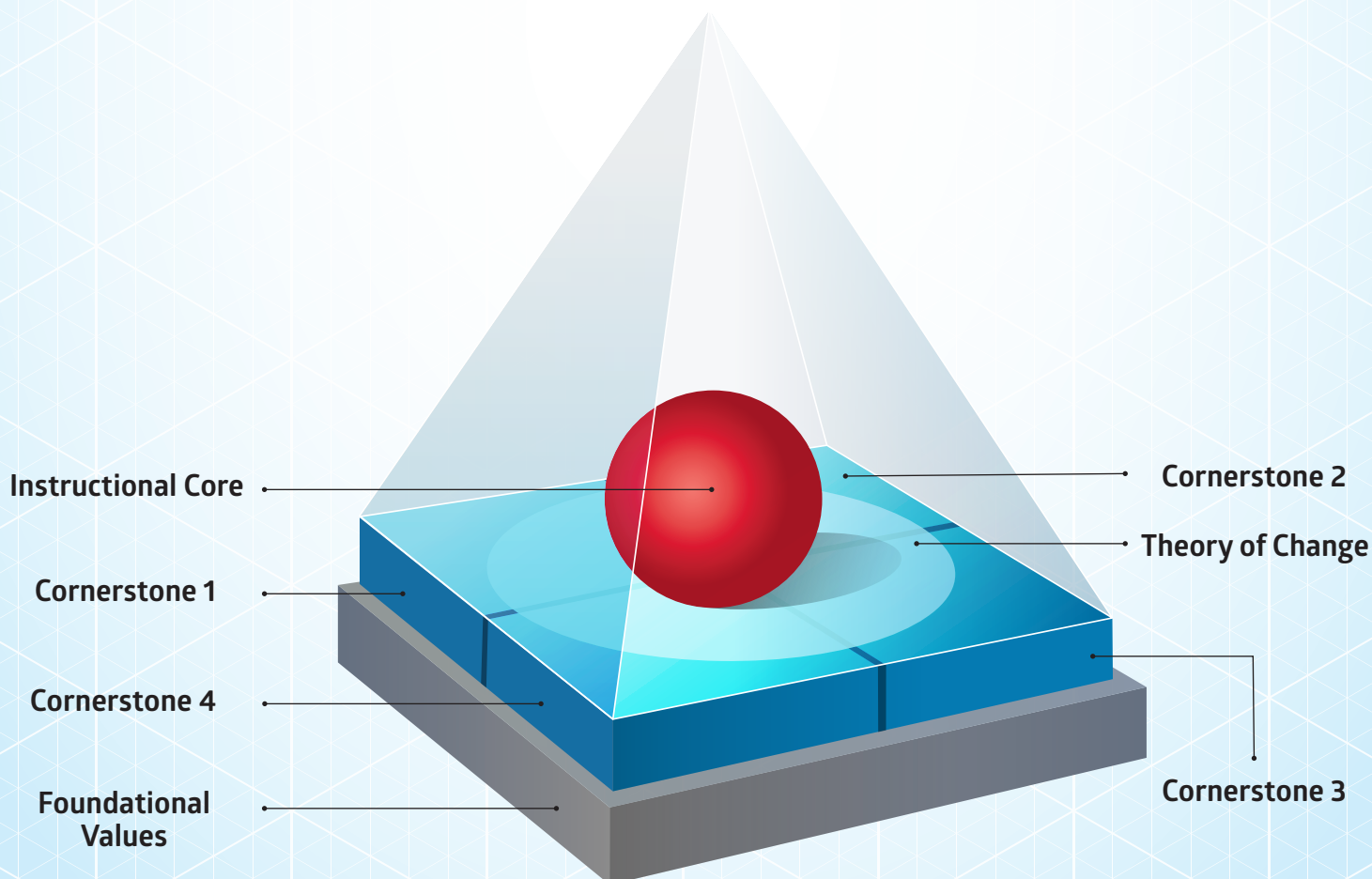
COHERENCE FRAMEWORK

The Coherence Framework is based on the work of Dr. Richard Elmore and the Data Wise School Improvement Process through Harvard University. Our framework defines our commitment to providing all scholars with academic excellence, choice, opportunity, and access. It serves as our compass and guide, keeping us focused on creating strong systems and structures that drive continuous improvement, ultimately enhancing our schools and student achievement.

Each layer of the framework represents a different phase of the work (from outer to inner):

- Foundational Values
- Theory of Change
- Cornerstones
- Instructional Core

Our *Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan* is a clear and guiding framework through which our goals and commitments are realized. It provides transparency and alignment across all cornerstones, ensuring a focused approach to excellence.



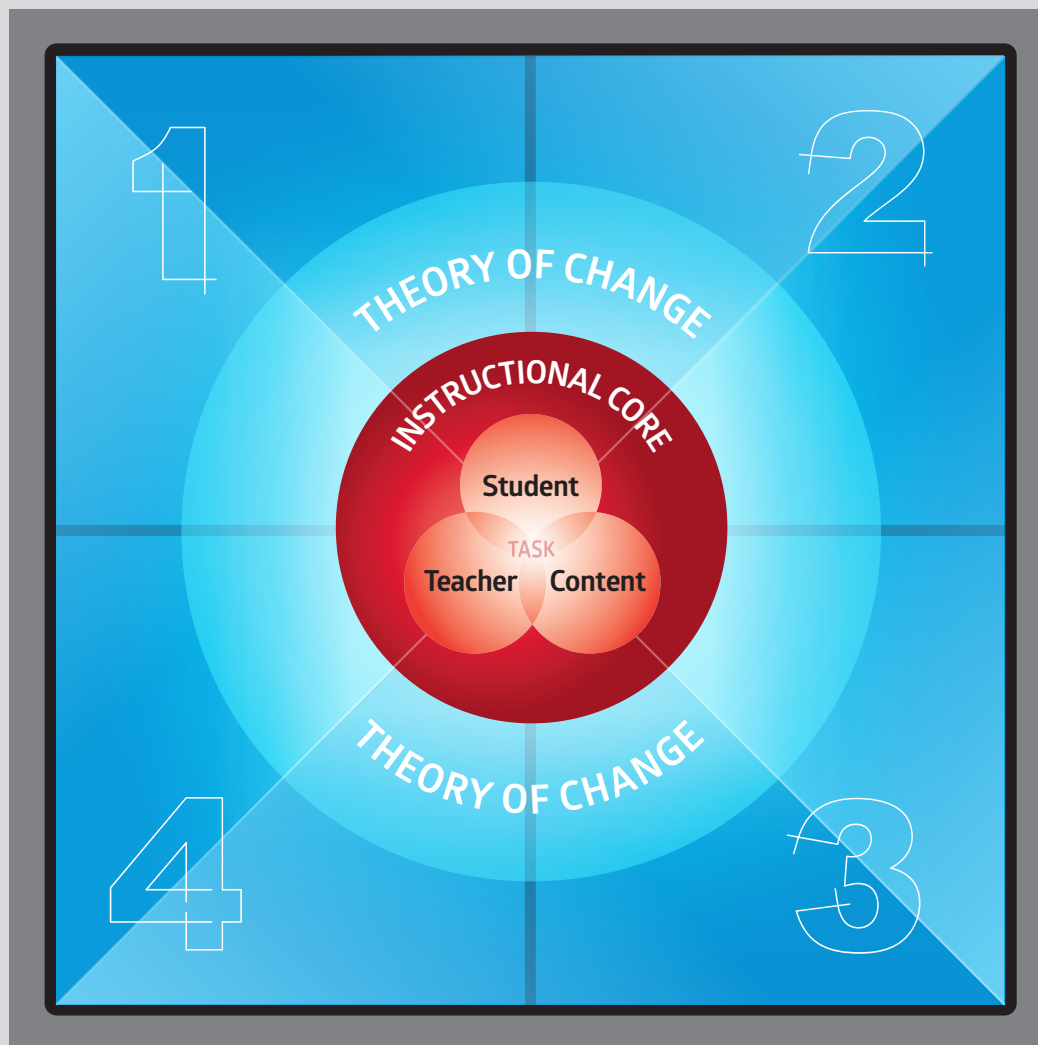
CORNERSTONE 1

Culture of Safety and Belonging

CORNERSTONE 2

Academic Achievement

COMMUNICATION — CULTURE — ACCOUNTABILITY



RELEVANCE — RELATIONSHIPS — TRUST — READINESS

CORNERSTONE 4

Partnerships, Family
and Community Engagement

CORNERSTONE 3

Operational Excellence



Akron Public Schools®

The four CORNERSTONES

Our approach is deeply rooted in the school board's guiding principles and focus, reflecting our dedication and commitment to the children of this community. We've identified four essential cornerstones to fortify this commitment. Within this plan, you'll encounter a range of strategic initiatives and commitments, which will not only shape our direction but also serve as a source of inspiration for our dedicated staff as we work together to achieve our shared goals for the scholars in our care.



1

CULTURE OF SAFETY AND BELONGING COMMITMENT:

We are committed to creating safe and supportive environments where all members of our school community are valued and empowered to reach their full potential.



2

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT COMMITMENT:

Provide high-quality instruction in order to improve academic outcomes so all scholars graduate life-ready.



3

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITMENT:

We will improve operational systems and processes to enhance district performance for increased scholar outcomes.



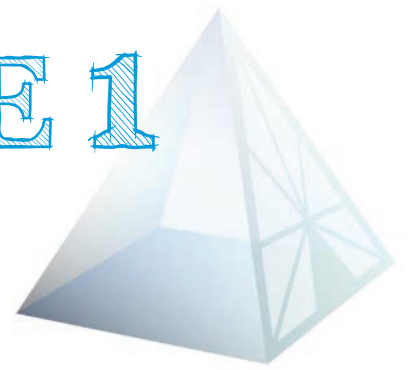
4

PARTNERSHIPS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITMENT:

We are committed to improving relationships by engaging families, partners, and the community in meaningful and supportive ways.

CORNERSTONE 1

CULTURE OF SAFETY AND BELONGING



Objectives

1. Increase the percentage of scholars experiencing a positive and supportive school culture.
2. Increase the percentage of staff experiencing a positive and supportive school culture.
3. Increase the percentage of families experiencing a positive and supportive school culture.
4. Increase the percentage of scholars with an attendance rate of 90% or greater.
5. Decrease scholar chronic absenteeism.
6. Increase the percentage of scholars and staff demonstrating social-emotional learning competencies.
7. Decrease out-of-school suspensions.

Initiatives

Aligned to objectives and drives the work

1. College & Career Academies: Transforming the School Experience with Ford Next Generation Learning
2. Stay in the Game! with Cleveland Browns Foundation
3. Be Kind 330
4. Beyond the School Day and Summer Experiences
5. Ohio Attendance Improvement Network with Harvard Proving Ground
6. Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

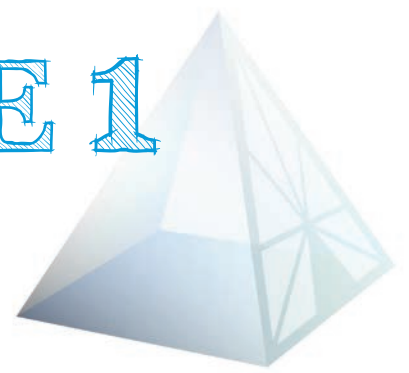
Actions / Strategies

Objectives 1, 2, and 3: Positive and Affirming Culture

- Increase scholar participation in extracurriculars, student clubs, and activities that align with scholar interest.
- Develop orientation programs to support new scholars in their transition and foster a welcoming and supportive environment.
- Deepen the College & Career Academies scholar experience through small learning communities and effective teams.
- Increase participation rate for all staff on the Transcend survey.
- Create opportunities for scholars and community members to share their voices, allowing families to express their opinions, ideas, and concerns.
- Develop district recommendations for building-wide welcoming protocols for educators, scholars, and families.
- Create building schedules to allow time dedicated for social-emotional learning (SEL), advisory, club, or non-academic enrichments.
- Provide client service training, expectations, and accountability measures to all staff.
- Create opportunities to hear scholar and community voices in the work and initiatives of the district.



CORNERSTONE 1



CULTURE OF SAFETY AND BELONGING

Actions/Strategies (Continued)

Objectives 4 and 5: Attendance

- Continue a districtwide attendance awareness campaign to promote regular school attendance throughout the year.
- Provide targeted and tiered interventions and resources to scholars and families to increase attendance to school and in class to address root causes.
- Assess current internal practices that may contribute to scholars' attendance issues.

Objective 6: Social and Emotional Learning

- Identify district assessment/universal screener and tools/resources (financial, people, etc.) to support Key Performance Indicator (KPIs).
- Intentionally embed social-emotional learning (SEL) in the academic schedule (advisories) including school-wide check-in and check-out processes.
- Implement a districtwide plan to ensure that every building implements a social-emotional learning (SEL) program.
- Sustain ongoing, comprehensive social-emotional learning (SEL) professional development offering to support scholar and staff SEL competencies to ensure every building implements an SEL program.
- Establish a mental health and wellness scholar leadership group to guide the implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) learning experiences.
- Continue to provide ongoing training relative to social-emotional learning (SEL), expectations, practices, and accountability measures for all employees.
- Continue to provide after school and summer programming.
- Ensure a connection between the divisions to ensure the consistency in effective practices and implementation.

Objective 7: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

- Create a districtwide restorative justice/practice framework to develop healthy relationships that are safe and supportive.
- Develop and implement a district Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) action plan to increase staff's knowledge of and capacity to use evidence-based strategies and support school-wide implementation of MTSS.
- Create a professional development program to deepen understanding of the MTSS.
- Collaborate with building leadership to foster an increase in scholar and family voice.
- Create a culture that fosters access and attainment of advanced academics, athletics, and activities ensuring all criteria is clearly communicated, especially to underserved communities
- Implement PBIS across all school buildings in the district
- Show alignment between positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS); social-emotional learning (SEL); College & Career Academies tactical implementations; restorative practices; and trauma-informed practices, etc., as universals that all scholars receive.



Commitment

We are committed to designing safe, affirming, and inclusive environments where all members of our school community are respected and supported to reach their full potential.

THE FIVE-YEAR MATRIX

Objective	Source	2022-23 baseline	2023-24 projected	2023-24 actual	2024-25 projected	2024-25 actual	2025-26 projected
1 Increase the percentage of scholars experiencing a positive and supportive school culture.	Transcend Affirmation Leap (scholar)	53% 54% response rate	57%	64% 65% response rate	68% 70% response rate		
2 Increase the percentage of staff experiencing a positive and supportive school culture.	Transcend Affirmation Leap (staff)	73% 1,525 responses	77%	68% 1,987 responses	72%		
3 Increase the percentage of families experiencing a positive and supportive school culture.	Transcend Affirmation Leap (families)	56%	61%	55%	60%		
	Transcend Connection & Community Leap (families)	57% 1,828 responses	62%	55% 1,653 responses	60%		
4 Increase the percentage of scholars with an attendance rate of 90% or greater.	Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Secure Data Center	52.7%	55.2%	55.3%	57.8%		
5 Decrease student chronic absenteeism.	Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Secure Data Center	47.3%	44.8%	44.7%	42.2%		
6 Increase the percentage of scholars and staff demonstrating social-emotional learning competencies.	Transcend Whole-Child Focus Leap (staff)	55%	59%	43%	47%		
	Transcend Whole-Child Focus Leap (student)	42%	46%	50%	54%		
7 Decrease the number of out-of-school suspensions.	Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Secure Data Center			11,720	11,134		

SYMBOL OR TEXT	DEFINITION
*	Symbol indicates unreported data or baseline data to be established in year one of reporting on strategic indicators.
Baseline	This data was collected prior to the implementation of the strategic plan. The baseline is our starting point to compare data for future year data reporting.
Multi-Year Average	The sum of the data values for each indicator divided by two, three, or four years of reported data.
Projected	Represents the anticipated data point for a defined indicator that will be measured on an annual basis.



CORNERSTONE 2

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



Objectives

1. Increase the percentage of scholars from the Early Learning Program (ELP) that are entering Kindergarten on track in Language and Literacy.
2. Improve the K-3 Literacy Rating by increasing the number of scholars who are moving from off-track to on-track.
3. Increase the number of scholars reading on grade level by the end of second grade.
4. Increase proficiency scores in English Language Arts and Math, including English II and Algebra I.
5. Improve the Performance Index Score by increasing achievement in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
6. Increase the percentage of scholars who earn at least one point on the College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness (CCWMR) (ACT, WebXams, Industry-based Credentials, etc.) component.
7. Improve the 4-year graduation rate.

Initiatives

Aligned to objectives and drives the work

1. Standards-based reading and math core curriculum with comprehensive support for all schools.
2. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to improve each scholar's academic performance and behavioral skills.
3. College and Career Academies to transform learning by providing engaging experiences that extend beyond the classroom and make learning relevant while developing scholar agency.

Actions / Strategies

- Develop a professional development plan that is aligned to the district objectives in order to build the capacity of educators.
- Deliver differentiated, standards and evidence-based tier-one core instruction using district-adopted resources.
- Utilize assessment data to intentionally plan instruction aligned to scholar needs.
- Build and facilitate a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) in both reading and math.
- Deliver structured literacy instruction that is explicit, systematic, and aligned to research-based practices.
- Implement high-quality professional learning communities (PLC) aligned to the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP).
- Incorporate an inquiry-based approach to teaching that fosters scholar agency and critical thinking.
- Expand the Early Learning Program (ELP) to increase kindergarten readiness (i.e., full day and/or locations).
- Provide pathways and opportunities for scholars to earn college credits, industry credentials, and work-based learning experiences.
- Collaborate with families and community partners to advance our literacy initiatives.



Commitment

Provide equitable, high-quality instruction in order to improve academic outcomes so all scholars graduate life-ready.

THE FIVE-YEAR MATRIX

Objective	Source	2022-23 baseline	2023-24 projected	2023-24 actual	2024-25 projected	2024-25 actual	2025-26 projected
1 Increase the percentage of scholars from the Early Learning Program (ELP) that are entering Kindergarten on track in Language and Literacy.	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) – on track	14%	24%	30.7%	34%		
2 Improve the K-3 Literacy Rating by increasing the number of scholars who are moving from off-track to on-track.	Ohio Schools Report Card Improving Literacy	19%	27%	23%	27%		
3 Increase the number of scholars reading on grade level by the end of second grade.	i-Ready Diagnostic	43%	51%	45%	49%		
4 Increase proficiency scores in English Language Arts and Math, including English II and Algebra I.	Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) OST	3: 42.8% 4: 37.0% 5: 47.7% 6: 29.9% 7: 35.6% 8: 28.9%	3: 47% 4: 41% 5: 52% 6: 34% 7: 40% 8: 33%	47% 46% 54% 29% 33% 24%	51% 50% 58% 33% 37% 28%		
	Grades 3-8 Math OST	3: 37.8% 4: 42.8% 5: 30.0% 6: 21.2% 7: 18.0% 8: 12.5%	3: 42% 4: 47% 5: 34% 6: 26% 7: 22% 8: 17%	36% 44% 37% 20% 19% 14%	40% 48% 41% 24% 23% 18%		
	ELA II OST	17.3%	22%	39%	43%		
	Algebra I OST	23.5%	28%	33%	37%		
5 Improve the Performance Index Score by increasing achievement in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.	Ohio Schools Report Card Performance Index	61.2	66.2	63.3	66.3		
6 Increase the percentage of scholars who earn at least one point on the College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness (CCWMR) (ACT, WebXams, Industry-based Credentials, etc.) component.	Ohio Schools Report Card CCWMR Indicator	42.3%	46%	76.6%	81%		
7 Improve the 4-year graduation rate.	Ohio Schools Report Card Graduation	85%	87%	87.7%	89%		

SYMBOL OR TEXT	DEFINITION
★	Symbol indicates unreported data or baseline data to be established in year one of reporting on strategic indicators.
Baseline	This data was collected prior to the implementation of the strategic plan. The baseline is our starting point to compare data for future year data reporting.
Multi-Year Average	The sum of the data values for each indicator divided by two, three, or four years of reported data.
Projected	Represents the anticipated data point for a defined indicator that will be measured on an annual basis.



CORNERSTONE 3



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

(INCLUDES HUMAN CAPITAL/PROFESSIONAL LEARNING)

Objectives

1. Maintain at least two months of unencumbered cash reserves at all times.
2. Identify key metrics to monitor and measure improvement in organizational performance:
 - Maintain a 92% daily substitute teacher fill rate
3. Improve employee retention.
4. Strategically reorganize and repurpose existing positions and create new roles, ensuring alignment of responsibilities for operational efficiency.
5. Restructure the HR Department into a Human Capital Department, encompassing comprehensive support for personnel performance, recruitment and retention.
6. Expand the Communications Department to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of internal and external communications by identifying and fulfilling key positions.
7. Reduce the full-time teacher vacancy rates annually by the first day of school.
8. Improve overall job satisfaction and wellness for all staff (i.e., meaningful work, growth opportunities, professional support and engagement).
9. Expand the pool of qualified vendors to ensure broader and more competitive procurement opportunities.

Initiatives

Aligned to objectives and drives the work

1. Technology upgrade for data collection and reporting of key metrics related to organizational and human capital performance, incorporating client feedback for continuous improvement in client satisfaction. (i.e; tracking systems, etc.)
2. Operational efficiency standards to be fiscally responsible.
3. Strong employee development strategies, including training and talent alignment.

Actions/Strategies

- Reduction of overall budget by four percent (4%) for fiscal year 2025.
- Utilize key metrics to establish a focus for ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- Partner with local government entities to expand vendor contracts and expand vendor opportunities.
- Streamline district services by implementing a staffing position control system.
- Evaluate and enhance districtwide employee onboarding processes.
- Deploy a districtwide automated timekeeping system to ensure the accuracy of payroll and attendance.
- Identify and incorporate client satisfaction standards to be measured by deploying surveys and feedback tools.
- Identify and monitor the distribution of funds and resources, including the use of district physical assets, to ensure effective and strategic allocation across the district.
- Create robust leadership development initiatives
- Develop a district wide staff professional development plan for all non-instructional staff (i.e., Vector implementation schedule, paraprofessionals)
- Identify and monitor the distribution of funds and resources, including use of various district physical assets.
- Continue evaluation of vendor agreements related to HC functions.



SYMBOL AND TEXT DEFINITIONS FOR THE CHART ON OPPOSITE PAGE

Please reference key found on pages 13, 15 or 18.

Commitment

We will optimize operational systems, structures, employee development, and processes to advance district performance, fostering equitable and inclusive scholar outcomes.

THE FIVE-YEAR MATRIX

Objective	Source	2022–23 baseline	2023–24 projected	2023–24 actual	2024–25 projected	2024–25 actual	2025–26 projected
1 Maintain at least two months of unencumbered cash reserves at all times.	MUNIS and Forecast 5	> Two Months Available Cash Reserves	Continued to review and report monthly cash balances	FY24 met the 2 months unencumbered balance with slight improvement overall balance at the close of June 30, 2024	Development of district wide Facilities Master to properly plan for budgeting process		
2 Identify key metrics to monitor and measure improvement in organizational performance:	Metric Reports	★		Key metrics identified			
· Maintain a 92% daily substitute teacher fill rate	(AESOP) Substitute Fill Rate	90.11%	90.11%	90.11%	92%		
3 Improve employee retention.	MUNIS Voluntary Teacher Transfer request	168	168	101	80		
	First Year Turnover	138	138	170	100		
4 Strategically reorganize and repurpose existing positions and create new roles, ensuring alignment of responsibilities for operational efficiency.	2024 Fiscal Recovery Plan	★	FY24 Fiscal Recovery Plan developed and implemented	Reduction of \$20,000,000 in Labor Reductions	District Labor Budget reduced by \$10,000,000		
5 Restructure the HR Department into a Human Capital Department, encompassing comprehensive support for personnel performance, recruitment and retention.	Satisfaction Survey—Year 2	★					
6 Expand the Communications Department to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of internal and external communications by identifying and fulfilling key positions.	MUNIS Staffing for Communications	4/6	4/6	5/6	6/6		
7 Reduce the full-time teacher vacancy rates annually by the first day of school.	(AESOP) Teacher Vacancies at the start of School Year	42	42	57	30		
8 Improve overall job satisfaction and wellness for all staff (i.e., meaningful work, growth opportunities, professional support and engagement).	Transcend Staff Survey	73% 1,525 responses	77%	68% 1,987 responses	72%		
9 Expand the pool of qualified vendors to ensure broader and more competitive procurement opportunities.	MUNIS	MUNIS report +15 as base info	Reviewed all MUNIS vendors and outreach to seek info per vendor and add to MUNIS	MUNIS report = 23 Increase of 34%	MUNIS report thru 10/24/25 = 25 increase of 8% Review of Board Policies 6320/6325 to revise to new Ohio State bid standards		

CORNERSTONE 4



PARTNERSHIPS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Objectives

1. Improve our building level two-way communication system with families, partners, and communities.
2. Improve the offerings of family engagement opportunities to provide voice and empowerment.
3. Increase the number of Akron resident scholars enrolled in Akron Public Schools.
4. Decrease dropout rates by improving scholar engagement.
5. Increase the percentage of scholars who access and participate in K-12 guaranteed experiences.

Initiatives

Aligned to objectives and drives the work

1. Family Resource Centers with United Way of Summit & Medina
2. College & Career Academies: Transforming Business Engagement
3. APS Family Engagement Center
4. Scholar Voice and Ambassador Program
5. Beyond the School Day, Athletics and Arts membership



Actions/Strategies

Objective 1: Two-Way Communication System

- Investigate and implement a new system of digital communications that all schools and the district can use to unify school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
- Unify an online help portal, leveraging technology via the website, for one-stop solutions, questions, and directions to engagement within our district that also monitors for completion/closes feedback loops.
- Dedicate social media expertise that allows families, partners, and community members to follow key information, engagement opportunities, and voice for important school initiatives.
- Continue a robust public relations toolkit and onboarding strategies for our partners to acknowledge the successes they have had with our schools.
- Improve communications around the unique offerings and assets of Akron Public Schools.

Objective 2: Meaningful Family Engagement

- Provide training and accountability measures for meaningful family engagement to our schools.
- Expand the outreach of Family Resource Centers to provide cluster wide support for scholars and families.
- Establish cluster-based family advisory councils to elevate family voice and impact decision-making.
- Utilize and maximize the family and community engagement coordinator(s) to develop effective action plans for family advisory councils.
- Develop an evaluation process to gauge the impact of family advisory councils.

Actions/Strategies (Continued)

Objectives 3 and 4: Enrollment and Empowerment

- Employ intentional interventions for scholars who did not report to school or are chronically absent.
- Deploy a fully-funded communications and marketing plan to retain, recruit, and reclaim families to Akron and Akron Public Schools.
- Create a county-wide awareness campaign highlighting the unique opportunities we provide in Akron Public Schools.
- Analyze enrollment data that identifies reasons for enrollment/withdrawal and then take action on the results.
- Comprehensive mental health services integrated with Community Partners, Engagement Center, School Counselors, and Special Education.
- Implement a research-based dropout prevention program.
- Continue implementing programs (KG, 4th, 6th, 9th, and Graduates) that are key transition points for continued engagement and success.

Objective 5: Guaranteed Academy Partner Engagements

- Align work-based learning experiences to pathways.
- Analyze current scholar data surrounding guaranteed experiences and develop plans to ensure broad and consistent access.
- Implement Elementary College & Career Academies tactical plans.
- Develop and implement partner engagement tactical plan for transformational work around College & Career Academies for elementary schools.
- Continue training community partners to support the systems and structures to transform the scholar experience.

Commitment

We are committed to improving relationships by engaging family, partners, and community in a meaningful way through caring, inclusive, and responsive experiences.

THE FIVE-YEAR MATRIX

Objective	Source	2022-23 baseline	2023-24 projected	2023-24 actual	2024-25 projected	2024-25 actual	2025-26 projected
1 Improve our building level two-way communication system with families, partners, and communities.	Audit of current systems used by schools	*	*	*	Analyze audit findings Investigate potential parent apps Provide recommendation Set clear objectives and measurable goals		
2 Improve the offerings of family engagement opportunities to provide voice and empowerment.	Summit Education Initiative (Coaching Contact)	*	*	211	250		
3 Increase the number of Akron resident scholars enrolled in Akron Public Schools.	Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (Enrollment)	20,103	20,615	19,744	20,237		
4 Decrease dropout rates by improving scholar engagement.	Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (Graduation Rate)	86.1% (Class of 2022)	87% (Class of 2023)	87.7% (Class of 2023)	88% (Class of 2024)		
5 Increase the percentage of scholars who access and participate in K-12 guaranteed experiences.	SchoolLinks and eSchool	*	*	70%	75%		

SYMBOL OR TEXT	DEFINITION
*	Symbol indicates unreported data or baseline data to be established in year one of reporting on strategic indicators.
Baseline	This data was collected prior to the implementation of the strategic plan. The baseline is our starting point to compare data for future year data reporting.
Multi-Year Average	The sum of the data values for each indicator divided by two, three, or four years of reported data.
Projected	Represents the anticipated data point for a defined indicator that will be measured on an annual basis.

IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting and Execution

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure our dedication and commitment to excellence, we will continue to innovate, adapt, and respond with a focus on success. These cornerstones and commitments will help us put the right systems and structures in place for success. Akron Public Schools is committed to a collaborative effort around implementation with fidelity and transparently reporting on the work of this plan.

Some in our community have expressed concerns about the district's commitment to the ***Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan***. We are committed to the work and *will* continue to engage the community in this process.

Each Month

Cornerstone leads will provide progress reports and plans of action to the superintendent while the superintendent's internal think tank will meet to review and discuss data, progress, and plans of action.

Monthly, the superintendent will provide a blueprint update.

Each Nine Weeks

Cornerstone teams will meet and review Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and progress toward objectives.

At the ends of each nine weeks, the superintendent and cornerstone leads will provide updates to the board.

Each Year

The superintendent and cornerstone leads will share an annual report with the board and the public.

The ***Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan*** will be updated annually with progress data.

Commitments from the ***Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan*** will be updated.

REPORTING AND EXECUTION

Cornerstone leads will meet with their cornerstone team members to review progress and make appropriate and applicable recommendations where needed on objectives, initiatives, and actions/strategies. When there are occasions where we are not meeting our KPIs, cornerstone leads will work with their teams to develop a plan of action for improvement.

Cornerstone leads will provide progress reports and plans of action to the superintendent who will share them with members of the advisory committee and the Akron Public Schools Board of Education. The superintendent's internal think tank will meet to review and discuss data, progress, and plans of action.

The district will use the Data Wise Improvement Process and the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) as frameworks for continuous improvement.

At the end of each nine weeks, the superintendent and cornerstone leads will provide updates to the board.

Each year, the superintendent and cornerstone leads will share an annual report with the board and the public for feedback. ***Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan*** will be updated for the next year with progress data. Commitments from the ***Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan*** will be updated.

The Akron Public Schools Scorecard is connected to the district's commitments outlined in the ***Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan***, and it will be made available to all stakeholders quarterly for review.

To ensure our dedication and commitment to excellence, we will continue to innovate, adapt, and respond with a focus on success.

BOARD MEMBERS

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Culture of Safety and Belonging

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Marcie Ebright
Dr. Wanda Lash

Academic Achievement

Dr. Tamea Caver
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Operational Excellence

Angela Carter
Debra Foulk

Partnerships, Family and Community Engagement

Dr. Carla Chapman
Marcie Ebright
Dr. Wanda Lash

COMMUNICATION

Joanne Isaac

Superintendent's LEVERS for Success

The *Levers for Success* are the superintendent's focus areas over the next five years to ensure that the *Blueprint* is a success.

Expansion of Pre-K to include all-day services



Successful implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies where at least 80%, with a 10% gain every year, of Akron Public Schools scholars will be at or above grade level in reading and math by the end of second grade



Expansion of the communication department to facilitate effective internal and external communication and engagement with partners, the community and stakeholders, coupled with strategic marketing efforts to enhance recruitment for scholars and employees



Successful implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) districtwide



Provide engaging and hands-on opportunities and experiences for scholars to learn about financial literacy



Ensure access to pathway opportunities for all scholars to improve graduation rates, college and career readiness, and workforce development.



Blueprint for Excellence—The Strategic Plan and Coherence Framework to guide the work of Akron Public Schools



PROGRESS KEY FOR FOCUS AREAS

- One unit of progress achieved
- Progress still to be made

Conclusion

As we progress through our five-year strategic plan, the *Blueprint for Excellence* will guide us in setting priorities, focusing our efforts, strengthening operations, and allocating resources to ensure that employees and stakeholders are aligned on common goals, committed to shared outcomes, and prepared to assess and adjust the district's direction in response to a changing environment.

We affirm our dedication and commitment to the Akron community's children. The future is bright, and by adhering to these cornerstones, we will shape a better tomorrow for our scholars, growth for our employees, and a positive transformation for the Akron community.



Akron Public Schools.



Portrait of an **ELEMENTARY SCHOLAR**

SCHOLAR

SOCIAL SKILLS

- I AM KIND.
- I AM RESPECTFUL.
- I AM A LEADER.
- I AM CONFIDENT.
- I COMMUNICATE WELL.
- I AM A TEAM MEMBER.

CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY

- I WILL TAKE ACTION TO HELP IN MY HOME.
- I WILL TAKE ACTION TO HELP IN MY SCHOOL.
- I WILL TAKE ACTION TO CREATE A BETTER AND PEACEFUL WORLD.
- I WILL RESPECT DIVERSE VIEWS, RACES, CULTURES, AND INDIVIDUALS.



STRONG HABITS OF MIND

- I AM PERSISTENT.
- I AM FLEXIBLE.
- I AM CREATIVE.
- I AM A PROBLEM SOLVER.
- I AM KIND TO MYSELF.

REAL WORLD SKILLS

- I WILL DO MY BEST.
- I WILL BE ON TIME EVERY DAY.
- I WILL LEARN EVERY DAY.

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

- I WILL EXPLORE CAREERS THAT INTEREST ME.
- I WILL SET DAILY OBTAINABLE GOALS.

I AM READY FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL!

Portrait of a **GRADUATE**

SOCIAL SKILLS

- COLLABORATIVE
- BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS
- COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY
- LEADS OTHERS
- ACCEPTS FEEDBACK

CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY

- CULTURALLY COMPETENT
- CONTRIBUTES TO THE COMMUNITY, BOTH GLOBAL AND LOCAL
- MEMBER OF A SOCIAL NETWORK

STRONG HABITS OF MIND

- PERSISTENCE
- GRIT
- FLEXIBILITY
- STRATEGIC THINKER
- SELF-CONFIDENT
- SELF-DIRECTED
- CREATIVE

REAL WORLD SKILLS

- ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
- WORK EXPERIENCE
- TRANSFERABLE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

- IDENTIFIES CHALLENGES
- SUCCESSFULLY DESIGNS AND IMPLEMENTS A PLAN

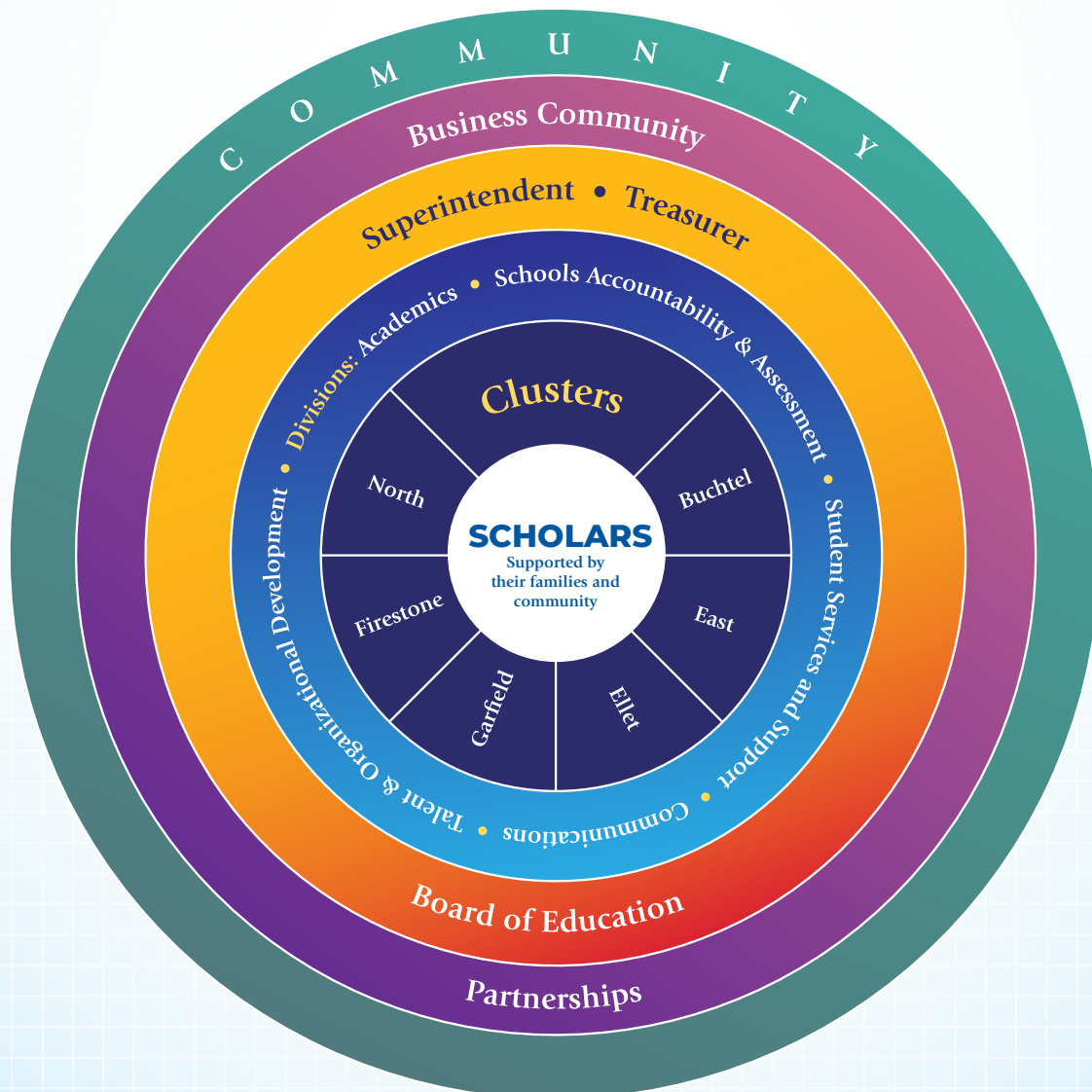
READY FOR COLLEGE. CAREER. LIFE.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN *for Scholar Success*

Organizational Design for Scholar Success illustrates a structure whereby all stakeholders see how they impact scholars in Akron Public Schools. It shows that scholars are centered in the organization, supported by families, the community, business partners, and a network of schools.

Key leadership roles, including the superintendent and treasurer, oversee various divisions such as Academics, Schools Accountability & Assessment, Student Services and Support, Communications, and Talent & Organizational Development.

These components are linked to broader clusters and partnerships overseen by the Board of Education. The design emphasizes community and structural support aimed at fostering scholars' success.



SPOTLIGHTS

at Akron Public Schools

8,000 College Credit Hours

APS scholars continue to earn up to 8,000 college credit hours annually, ensuring a strong head start toward higher education.

70% Graduate with an Associate Degree

70% of Akron Early College High School graduates earn both a high school diploma and an Associate Degree, setting them on a fast track to success.

Apprentice Ohio Expansion

Increased credential and pre-apprenticeship offerings through our partnership with the Greater Cleveland Partnership provide more opportunities for students to gain hands-on industry experience.

Work-Based Learning

APS expands access to Work-Based Learning experiences for high school students, equipping them with skills for future careers.

STEM Designation

The National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF) MS and HS @ Robinson CLC have earned STEM Designation, showcasing the district's commitment to innovation and scientific exploration.

Governor's Thomas Edison Award

Akron Public Schools earned this prestigious award for promoting STEM education beyond traditional classroom settings, making science and technology accessible to all.

SafetyTown Partnership

APS celebrated a five-year collaboration with Akron Children's Hospital, Akron Fire, and Akron Police to bring SafetyTown programming to our community, making it the only one in Ohio.

PBIS Recognition

APS achieved State PBIS recognition with 40 schools earning awards for Tier 1 and Tier 2 practices. We also received the PBIS District award, placing APS among the top 25 of Ohio's 616 districts.

Innovation Generation Scholarship

In partnership with the University of Akron, APS offers full tuition scholarships to qualifying scholars, further expanding access to higher education.

Levy Passage and New North High School

The passage of the Akron Public Schools levy in 2024, supported by 57.7% of voters, will raise \$4.4 million annually for 37 years to fund new school construction and \$26.4 million annually for operations. The levy will lead to the construction of a new North High School, addressing overcrowding and aging facilities.

