



2026-2031 Strategic Plan

Engage Orange

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS. INSPIRING FUTURES.

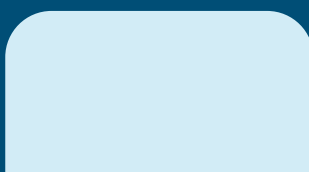
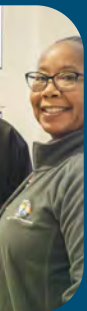


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Mission Statement

The mission of Orange County Schools is to educate students in a safe, inclusive environment where we engage, challenge, and inspire them to reach their maximum potential.

Vision

Preparing every learner for lifelong service and success.

At the February 2026 OCS Board of Education meeting, we celebrated the teachers who received their National Board Certification during the 2025-26 school year. We are grateful for the dedication, expertise, and commitment of these teachers who make a positive difference every day in OCS.





ENGAGE ORANGE

Message from the Orange County Schools Board of Education

As the Orange County Board of Education, we believe our public schools are strongest when they reflect the voices of our community.

That belief is central to the Orange County Schools 2026–2031 Strategic Plan, which was shaped through meaningful engagement with students, families, staff, and our public. Surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions allowed our whole community to help define the strengths and priorities that will guide our schools forward.

What we heard was clear: our community believes in Orange County Schools. They expect us to keep improving, and we know our local public schools are ready to lead the way when our dedicated educators, supportive families, and determined students work together.

In recent years, we have seen exciting gains in academic achievement, stronger student growth, and dramatic improvement in grade-level proficiency and graduation outcomes.

These results aren't just numbers. This reflects real progress for individual students who are expanding opportunities for their futures and preparing for their next stage in life.

Building on this momentum, Engage Orange reflects our shared commitment to continuous improvement and shoring up pathways to success for every student we serve.

Grounded in data and community input, this plan focuses on measurable outcomes that matter.

Expectations are high—and they should be. We expect continued improvement in academic achievement, student wellbeing, and post-graduation outcomes across all our schools. We also know that safe, inclusive learning environments and high-quality teaching are crucial to preparing each student for whatever challenges life may bring.

The role of the Board is to provide strategic direction, responsible oversight, and consistent support for the foundations being built in classrooms every day. This plan aligns all the work under a shared vision: that every student will be engaged, challenged, and inspired to prepare for whatever comes next.

The progress we have made is a foundation, not a finish line. We are moving forward with confidence—not because this work is easy, but because we have seen what our students and staff can accomplish by working together.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our educators, staff, families, and community members. Your partnership strengthens our schools and helps ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Message from Superintendent Dr. Danielle Jones

Students, families, staff, and community members of Orange County Schools—

I am proud to say this plan belongs to all of us.

Over the past year, we engaged with our community and asked an important question: How do we continue improving outcomes so every student is prepared for life beyond graduation?

“Engage Orange,” the OCS 2026–2031 Strategic Plan, is our collective answer and our shared commitment to action. I fully support both the process used to develop this plan and the final product that emerged from it because it reflects the voices, experiences, and aspirations of the Orange County Schools community.

This plan serves as our roadmap for the next five years and is grounded in the belief of collective efficacy—the understanding that when we work together with a shared sense of purpose and belief in our ability to make a difference, we can positively impact outcomes for every student. I am especially proud that this plan was not created in isolation, but through authentic engagement with students, families, staff, and community members.

That collective voice shaped a plan built on four pillars that ensure we will prepare students for life after graduation, engage the whole child in safe and supportive environments, empower excellence in our staff, and strengthen the systems that sustain our schools.

Achieving these outcomes will require all of us working in alignment, believing in the power of our shared efforts:

Principals will lead instructional environments where students and staff can thrive. Teachers will continue to design engaging and challenging learning experiences that help students apply knowledge in meaningful ways. Students will take ownership of their learning by setting goals, reflecting on their progress, and building habits for success. Families and community partners will remain essential collaborators in supporting and advocating for our children.

When we align our work, support one another, and remain focused on students, we strengthen our collective ability to ensure every child succeeds—not by chance, but through our shared commitment and action together.

This plan does not represent a starting point—it reflects the next phase of our work. It is designed to bring greater focus, coherence, and consistency to efforts already underway.

We are moving forward as one community and with a clear understanding that success depends on how well we translate this plan into daily practice. We have good reason to be excited about what comes next for our students and our community. Thank you, as always, for your continued engagement and investment in Orange County Schools.



Principals will lead instructional environments where students and staff can thrive.



Teachers will continue to design engaging and challenging learning experiences that help students apply knowledge in meaningful ways.



Students will take ownership of their learning by setting goals, reflecting on their progress, and building habits for success.



Families and community partners will remain essential collaborators in supporting and advocating for our children.

Facts and Figures



About 6915 Students

attend Orange County Schools in kindergarten through 12th grade.



About 1000 staff

are employed full-time in Orange County Schools.



13 Schools

7 Elementary Schools

3 Middle Schools

2 Traditional High Schools

1 Alternative School

Annual Accountability Highlights



100% of schools

met or exceeded growth in the 2024-25 school year.



87.7% graduation rate

for the four-year cohort in the 2024-2025 school year (+8% points from the previous year).



5 schools

earned a School Performance Grade of a "B," during the 2024-25 school year (up from three schools the previous year).



+3.5 pt increase in

grade-level proficiency to 58.4% on state-mandated EOC & EOG exams during the 2024-25 school year.

OCS Staff Highlights



41% of educators

hold advanced titles.



94% of teachers

met or exceeded academic growth during the 2024-25 school year.



85% of teachers

have three or more years of experience.



14% of teachers

are National Board Certified.

Special Populations Demographics



~16% of students

receive special education services.



~14% of students

are identified as Multilingual Learners.



~19% of students

are identified in the Academically and Intellectually Gifted program.

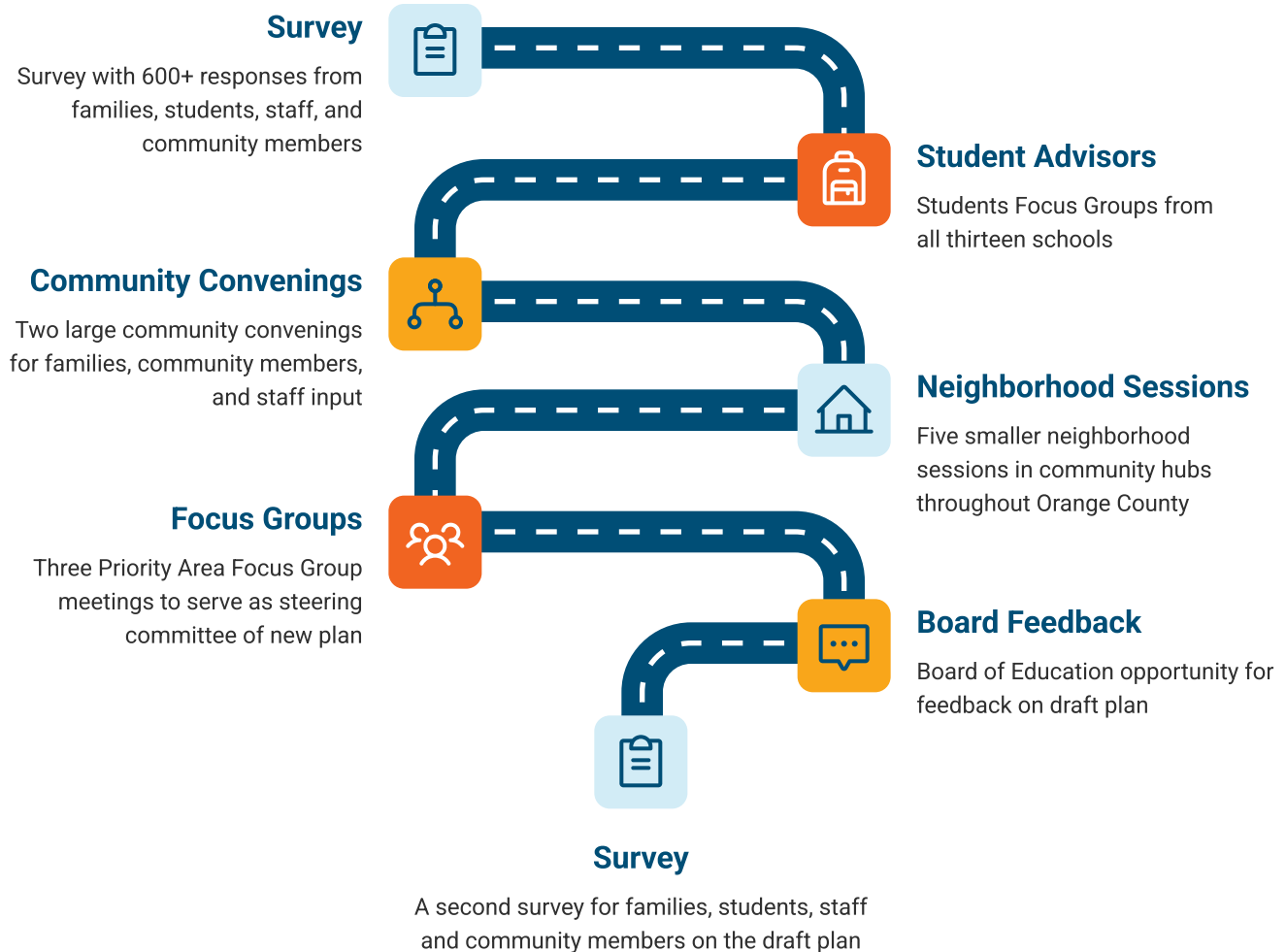


6 out of 13 schools

receive money through the federal Title I program based on the number of students enrolled from low-income families.

A Community-Driven Process to Build One Unified Plan

Our Strategic Planning Process



Engage Orange is grounded in the belief that when many voices come together, we create stronger, more meaningful outcomes for every learner.

Through deep and intentional collaboration with stakeholders across Orange County Schools, this work reflects the shared experiences, aspirations, and priorities of our students and community. Educators, families, staff, students, and community partners all contributed to help shape a collective vision for the future.

Orange County Schools extends sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the development of this plan.



ENGAGE ORANGE

Portrait of an Orange County Schools Graduate

The OCS Experience Empowers Every Student to Step Confidently Into Their Future

Our community made one thing clear: preparing students for the future requires more than a list of outcomes. It requires a shared commitment to the experiences that shape who our students become.

The **OCS Experience** is a promise of what every student will experience in our schools: engaging, relevant, and empowering learning that builds the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Through these experiences, every student grows into an **OCS Graduate** who is a confident and future-ready individual prepared to succeed in life after graduation.



OCS Experience		Portrait of an OCS Graduate
Engage in relevant learning that sparks complex thinking	→	Empowered and Adaptable Learner
Explore relevant and authentic challenges connected to community and global issues	→	Future-Ready Critical Thinker
Collaborate and communicate effectively across diverse settings and audiences	→	Effective Communicator and Collaborator
Explore diverse perspectives and develop a sense of identity and responsibility	→	Responsible and Empathetic Individual
Create and design through meaningful application	→	Innovative Problem Solver

Organization of the Plan

Engage Orange is organized around four key **pillars**, each with a set of **focus areas** that outline the major priorities of our work. Within each focus area are **action steps** that explain the initiatives and strategies that the district will implement to drive progress over the next five years.

Each pillar also includes **performance indicators** that are instrumental in our commitment to the continuous improvement model. The performance indicators are the measurable outcomes that will be used to track progress and determine whether our efforts are improving results over time and across each pillar.

Pillar



Focus Area



Performance Indicator



Action



Pillar

A **broad, long-term priority** area that represents a major commitment of the five-year strategic plan.

Focus Area

The **specific components** within a pillar that clarify what the district will concentrate on to make progress over the next five years.

Performance Indicator

The **measurable outcomes** the district will use to **track progress** and determine whether the work in each focus area is improving results.

Action

The **key steps, initiative, or strategies** the district will implement in each focus area to improve performance indicators.

Excellence & Equity

The Four Pillars Guiding the Plan

Engage Orange is organized around **four core pillars** that define our priorities, guide the alignment of resources, and drive action to improve outcomes for all students.

While each pillar is essential on its own, the plan's collective strength lies in how the four pillars work together to share the responsibility for advancing student outcomes, strengthening culture and climate, and ensuring operational excellence.

Communication

Each pillar is grounded in two unifying components: **equity** and **communication**.

Equity

serves as the foundation of all decision-making and represents the lens through which we evaluate priorities, allocate resources, and shape policy. It ensures that the district reduces opportunity gaps and every student receives what they need to succeed in school.

Communication

is the bridge connecting schools, families, and the broader community. Throughout Engage Orange, each pillar intentionally embeds opportunities for meaningful, two-way dialogue, ensuring that families and stakeholders are not only informed, but engaged as partners in the work.

Engage Orange is grounded in a shared commitment to achieving excellence across the four pillars outlined below.

Prepare Students
For Life After Graduation

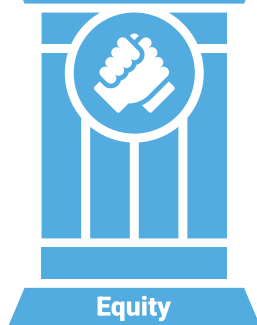
Communication



Equity

Engage the Whole Student
in Safe and Supportive
Learning Environments

Communication



Equity

Cultivate, Support, and
Retain Excellent Staff

Communication



Equity

Maximize Operational
Excellence to Support
Student Success

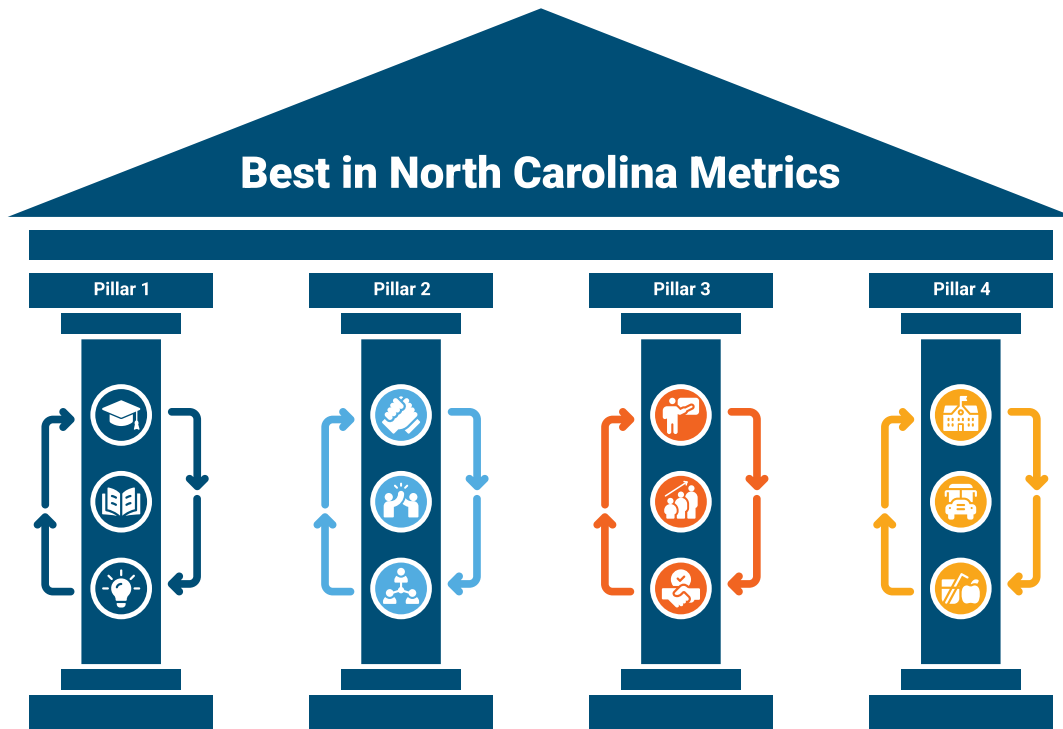
Communication



Equity

Driving Continuous Improvement and Measuring Impact

At the heart of Engage Orange is an unwavering commitment to each and every student in Orange County Schools. When all four pillars work effectively and collaboratively, they drive meaningful student outcomes. Improvement happens within each pillar through a continuous cycle of collaboration, reflection, and action. Formal targets are anchored in a defined set of priority outcomes the plan identifies as the Best in **North Carolina Metrics**.



Continuous Improvement in Action

The Continuous Improvement Model is a systematic approach to making ongoing, incremental changes over time. Within each pillar, teams monitor performance indicators through this continuous cycle.

How We Monitor

Teams track progress on key performance indicators within each pillar and report to the Board of Education and the community. This ensures transparency, alignment, and shared accountability across the system.

Measuring What Matters Most

Student outcomes improve when all four pillars operate effectively and in alignment. Engage Orange will track progress towards being the best in North Carolina using a defined set of measurable targets outlined on the following page.

ENGAGE ORANGE

Best in North Carolina Metrics

These indicators reflect our commitment to excellence and accountability across Orange County Schools. By setting clear, measurable targets, we will monitor our progress, ensure continuous improvement, reduce opportunity gaps, and hold ourselves accountable for delivering outcomes that prepare every student for life after graduation.



Four-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rate

This measure reflects our commitment to ensuring every student graduates prepared for their next step.



Target

Increase the adjusted four-year cohort high school graduation rate from **87.7% (2024-25)** to **95% by 2031**.



Academic Performance in 3-12 End-of-Grade/Course Exams

This metric reflects students' proficiency in meeting grade-level standards.



Target

Increase grade level proficiency from **58% to 70% by 2031**.



Performance on DIBELS 8 Early Literacy Assessment

Early literacy is foundational to all future learning. This measure ensures students are developing strong early literacy skills.



Target

Increase the percentage of all K-3 students at or above benchmark in DIBELS composite from **71% (2024-25)** to **79% by 2031**.



Performance in Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses

This measure tracks the percentage of industry-recognized credentials earned by CTE concentrators in their aligned pathway.



Target

Maintain the percentage of credentials earned by CTE Concentrators yearly at **80% or above. (83.7% in 2024-25)**



Performance on Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

This measure reflects how well students are mastering college-level content.



Target

Maintain the percentage of AP students earning a score of 3 or better on AP exams at **80% or better. (82% in 2024-25)**



Performance in Dual Enrollment

This metric measures student success in college-level coursework during high school.



Target

Maintain the percentage of students participating in dual enrollment courses who earn college credit with a score of **C or higher at 80% or above. (88% in 2024-25)**



ACT/ACT WorkKeys Composite Score

The ACT/ACT WorkKeys composite score provides insight into students' readiness for college and career pathways.



Target

Increase the average ACT/ACT WorkKeys composite score from **56.6% (2024-25)** to **65% by 2031**.

PILLAR 1



Prepare Students for Life After Graduation

We envision Orange County Schools as a school system where every student graduates confident, capable, and prepared to navigate an ever-changing world. Students will engage in meaningful, relevant learning that connects classroom experiences to their next phases of life. Students must be prepared to think critically, solve complex problems, communicate effectively, and continuously learn in new and evolving contexts.

This pillar ensures that our school district intentionally develops the whole student and reflects our commitment to ensuring every student develops the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to succeed.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Four-year Graduation Rate
- ✓ DIBELS 8 Early Literacy Benchmark
- ✓ End-of-Grade/Course Exams
- ✓ ACT/WorkKeys Composite
- ✓ CTE Credentials
- ✓ NC HS Diploma Endorsement
- ✓ AP/IB/CCP Outcome Data
- ✓ English Learner Proficiency Data
- ✓ NC Teacher Working Conditions
- ✓ Professional Learning System

FOCUS AREAS

Build Foundational Skills

Ensure High-Quality Instruction

Expand Access to Future-Ready Pathways

Provide Differentiation and Support for Special Populations

Engage in Effective Professional Learning



A student and teacher engage with each other during high-quality instruction.

Pillar 1 Actions



Build Foundational Skills

- **Expand high-impact literacy practices** and launch a parallel focus on foundational mathematics.
- **Utilize core resources** through a continued emphasis on systematic and explicit instruction.
- **Support the implementation fidelity of the Standard Treatment Protocol (STP)** to address K-12 foundational skill gaps.
- **Ensure Prekindergarten students transition** with readiness skills for success in Kindergarten.



Ensure High-Quality Instruction

- **Support the implementation fidelity of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** as a structured school improvement model that addresses behavior, attendance, and academics.
- **Align core resources and research-based teaching strategies** to design and deliver rigorous and engaging instruction.
- **Align educational experiences with future-ready skills**, such as critical thinking, communication, empathy, collaboration, and creativity, by integrating design thinking into academic content.
- **Strengthen instructional planning and student outcomes through effective Professional Learning Community (PLC)** collaboration and data-driven decision-making.
- **Utilize goal-setting processes** to ensure high-quality instruction and improve student outcomes.
- **Strengthen two-way communication with families** by providing clear, accessible information about instructional practices, student learning goals, and academic progress.



Expand Access to Future-Ready Pathways

- **Develop and implement a comprehensive K–12 career continuum** that ensures all students engage in developmentally appropriate opportunities for career awareness in elementary, exploration in middle, and experience in high school.
- **Expand awareness and access to pathways** such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Career and College Promise (CCP), and credentialed Career and Technical Education (CTE) to provide all students the opportunity to graduate with college credit, a credential, or career credit.
- **Facilitate individualized student career development plans** through career and college counseling and aligned course selection.
- **Engage families to increase understanding of pathway options.**

Pillar 1 Actions Continued



Provide Differentiation and Support for Special Populations

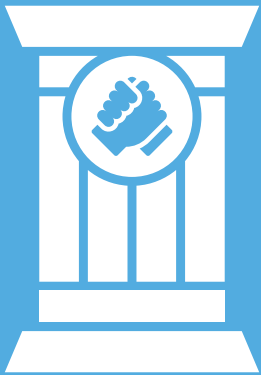
- **Provide continuous professional learning opportunities** to support advanced learners, exceptional students, and multilingual learners.
- **Increase intentional collaboration**, scaffolds, and supports for advanced learners, exceptional learners, and multilingual learners.
- **Ensure opportunities for core extension for advanced learners.**



Engage in Effective Professional Learning

- **Develop and implement a professional learning system** that includes aligned professional development, an online resource repository, job-embedded coaching, and peer collaboration opportunities.
- **Develop and implement a teacher leadership academy** to grow instructional leaders.
- **Provide high-quality professional development** on explicit instruction and other data-informed focus areas.
- **Leverage the Superintendent's Teacher of the Year Roundtable** and NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey data to engage in a continuous improvement model when developing and assessing the effectiveness of professional learning.

PILLAR 2



Engage the Whole Student in Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

In Orange County Schools, we believe that students deserve to learn in safe, supportive, and engaging environments. Students and staff can achieve educational excellence when we ensure their safety and well-being through thoughtfully-designed staff training, restorative practices, and clear protocols. This work begins with a shared understanding of the strengths and value that students bring to our classrooms, schools, and communities. Staff collaborate to provide support tailored to each student's academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. Efforts to keep students in school, along with strong family and community collaboration, help improve attendance and foster relationships, resilience, and long-term success.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Social Emotional Learning Student Survey
- ✓ Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
- ✓ Average Daily Attendance Data
- ✓ Yearly Chronic Absenteeism Reports
- ✓ Out-of-School Suspensions
- ✓ Co-Located Mental Health Data
- ✓ Family Academy Participation Data

FOCUS AREAS

Improve and Enhance Student Well-Being and Development

Engage Stakeholders Across Schools, the District, and the Community

Ensure and Maintain Safe and Supportive School Learning Environments



OCS staff creating a culture of connection one student at a time.

Pillar 2 Actions



Improve and Enhance Student Well-Being and Development

- **Provide research-based, trauma-informed practices** tailored to individual student needs.
- **Expand youth mental health** first-aid training.
- **Identify and implement** research-based strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism.
- **Expand access** to school-based mental health services.
- **Strengthen the implementation** of social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health curriculum across schools.



Engage Stakeholders Across Schools, the District, and the Community

- **Help families support their child's success** through family and community engagement programs and improved two-way communication.
- **Engage with community organizations** to enhance opportunities and resources that support families and students.
- **Build and sustain relationships between schools and community** organizations to provide services that support the whole student.



Ensure and Maintain Safe and Supportive School Learning Environments

- **Implement clear, fair, and restorative disciplinary procedures** to reduce disproportionality in discipline referrals and out-of-school suspensions.
- **Train and support school-level staff** on proactive prevention of disciplinary incidents.
- **Utilize student climate data to develop school-specific strategies** and implement core resources to support social-emotional health and safety for students and staff.
- **Strengthen the Standard Treatment Protocol (STP)** of the MTSS school improvement model through integrating research-based behavior and attendance supports to drive improved student outcomes.

PILLAR 3



Cultivate, Support, and Retain Excellent Staff

Orange County Schools is committed to building and sustaining an excellent workforce where all staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to grow. Through intentional professional learning, recognition, and strong systems of support, staff will strengthen their practice and contribute to safe, engaging, and effective learning environments. By investing in employees, Orange County Schools ensures positive outcomes for students, staff, and the entire school community.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Recruitment and Retention Data
- ✓ Staffing and Hiring Data
- ✓ Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- ✓ Employee Survey
- ✓ Beginning Teacher Survey

FOCUS AREAS

Strengthen Strategic Recruitment of a Highly-Qualified and Diverse Staff

Improve Retention of Excellent Staff

Enhance Employee Support and Development



Superintendent Dr. Jones celebrates the 2025 Teacher of the Year cohort.

Pillar 3 Actions



Strengthen Strategic Recruitment of a Highly-Qualified and Diverse Staff

- **Develop and sustain a highly-qualified and diverse applicant pool** by implementing proactive, targeted recruitment strategies that reflect the needs of students and the district.
- **Expand recruitment efforts through participation in virtual and in-person job fairs**, while building long-term relationships with strategic partners.
- **Strengthen the district's brand by clearly communicating the value of working in Orange County Schools** through coordinated marketing, outreach, and storytelling efforts.
- **Leverage technology to enhance the recruitment processes**, including digitized application systems and data-informed outreach.
- **Expand and deepen partnerships with colleges and universities** to create strong pipelines of future educators, including student teaching, internships, and early recruitment opportunities.
- **Develop and sustain internal pipelines that support current staff and students** in growing a future-ready workforce from within.
- **Analyze recruitment and hiring data, including applicant pool composition, new hire trends, and job fair participation**, to inform staffing strategies and improve talent acquisition outcomes.



Improve Retention of Excellent Staff

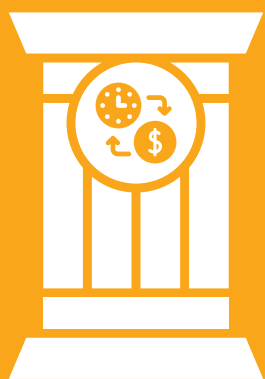
- **Foster positive, structured, and accountable work environments** that support staff effectiveness, collaboration, and professional growth across all schools and departments to improve student outcomes.
- **Expand leadership opportunities** for staff to build capacity, elevate teacher and staff voice, and support distributed leadership across the district.
- **Expand employee recognition efforts** to celebrate contributions, promote a culture of appreciation, and reinforce excellence in practice.



Enhance Employee Support and Development

- **Provide clear, consistent, and responsive support** in benefits management, licensure, and employment processes.
- **Increase awareness and understanding of policies and procedures** to promote consistency and compliance across the district.
- **Strengthen support systems for Beginning Teachers (BTs)** to promote growth, mentorship, and instructional excellence.
- **Increase access to and support for applicants** to obtain National Board Certification.
- **Strengthen onboarding processes** to ensure all new employees are welcomed, prepared, and supported for success from their first day forward.
- **Assess staff needs to ensure access to high-quality, relevant learning opportunities** aligned to their roles and responsibilities.

PILLAR 4



Maximize Operational Excellence to Support Student Success

Orange County Schools is committed to a coordinated and aligned operational system that supports students, staff, and school communities. Through strategic allocation of resources and implementation of efficient systems, we create safe and well-maintained learning environments where students and staff can thrive. Operational excellence serves as the foundation for high-quality educational experiences and reflects our commitment to creating the conditions that support student success.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Annual Financial Audit
- ✓ Transportation Efficiency Metrics
- ✓ Student Meal Participation Rates
- ✓ Indoor Air Quality Reports
- ✓ Facility Utilization and Planning Reports
- ✓ Digital Engagement Analytics
- ✓ Family Survey Results Related to Operational Services
- ✓ Participation in Engagement Sessions

FOCUS AREAS

Support a Safe and Healthy Learning Environment

Ensure Safe and Effective Transportation Services

Strengthen Efficient and Transparent School Business Functions

Expand Access to High-Quality School Nutrition Services

Optimize Facility Operations

Strengthen Strategic Engagement with Internal and External Stakeholders



Pillar 4 Actions



Support a Safe and Healthy Learning Environment

- **Ensure emergency preparedness** through required training, inspections, and drills.
- **Make sound safety decisions and clearly communicate** what families and staff need to know during events like severe weather, drills, and emergencies.
- **Maintain a secure, resilient, and highly available** technology infrastructure.



Ensure Safe and Effective Transportation Services

- **Strengthen recruitment and retention** of qualified transportation staff.
- **Optimize safety and student transportation route efficiency** to improve timeliness and reliability.
- **Enhance clear, consistent two-way communication** between families and transportation staff.



Strengthen Efficient and Transparent School Business Functions

- **Build stakeholder understanding of school finance and operations** through timely, accurate, and transparent communication and reporting to staff, families, and members of the community.
- **Offer community engagement sessions to increase awareness** of how school funding is received, allocated, and utilized.
- **Engage stakeholders** in the capital improvement planning process.
- **Partner with department and school leaders** to promote fiscal responsibility and effective resource management.



Expand Access to High-Quality School Nutrition Services

- **Provide nutritious, appealing meals** that encourage participation by incorporating student feedback to expand access to meal options.
- **Engage families and students in school nutrition programming** through clear and transparent communication and awareness of free and reduced-price meal programs.

Pillar 4 Actions Continued



Optimize Facility Operations

- **Monitor and enhance** the operational effectiveness of district facilities.
- **Implement school and community-aligned master planning** to ensure efficient and effective utilization of school facilities.
- **Collaborate with state agencies** to understand enrollment projections and plan for optimization of school buildings, boundaries, and assignments.



Strengthen Strategic Engagement with Internal and External Stakeholders

- **Streamline family communication** to ensure information about student experiences, progress, and opportunities is accessible and consistently delivered across multiple platforms.
- **Develop and maintain an accessible district online presence** that serves as a central hub of information and resources.
- **Elevate marketing and branding efforts** to clearly communicate the district's vision and celebrate successes across the school community.

Glossary

Key: **Acronym**

A

Academic Growth

Compares the actual performance of the school's students to their expected performance, which is based on their prior testing results.

Academic Proficiency

Defines whether students have met or exceeded grade-level standards on End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests, typically categorized as scoring at Level 3 or higher, indicating readiness for the next grade.

Academically/ Intellectually Gifted

AIG

North Carolina program for students performing or showing potential at high levels.

American College Test

ACT

College readiness exam taken by all North Carolina 11th-graders.

ACT WorkKeys

A system of assessments, curricula, and certifications developed by ACT to measure foundational, real-world workplace skills crucial for job success. In North Carolina, students who are CTE Concentrators take the ACT WorkKeys assessment.

Advanced Placement

AP

A program by the College Board that offers college-level curriculum and exams to high school students.

Average Daily Attendance

ADA

The sum of student days in attendance for all students divided by the total number of school days in the school month.

C

Career and College Promise

CCP

North Carolina's dual enrollment program allows eligible high school students to take tuition-free college courses at community colleges and universities, earning both high school and college credit simultaneously.

Career and Technical Education

CTE

Courses and credentials that prepare students for specific careers.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrator

A student who has completed a designated CTE pathway, which usually includes 2-3 courses of increasing difficulty. (For example: Horticulture I and Horticulture II)

Chronic Absenteeism

Defined as missing 10% or more days of school or ~18 days in a typical school year.

Core Resources

The essential curriculum and instructional materials adopted by the district that include district pacing, unit plans, and assessments aligned to rigorous, grade-level standards.

D

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DIBELS 8

Benchmark and progress monitoring tool for early reading.

Dual Enrollment

DE

Students earn high-school and college credit simultaneously (e.g., Career & College Promise).

E

Exceptional Children

EC

North Carolina's term for special education services.

End-of-Grade / End-of-Course

EOG/ EOC

State summative assessments in grades 3-8 and select high school subjects.

F

Family Academy

A district initiative that empowers families as partners in education by providing accessible learning opportunities, resources, and meaningful two-way engagement to support student achievement and well-being.

Federal Title I Program

The federal assistance program for K-12 public schools in the U.S., providing supplemental funding to schools with high percentages of low-income families to bridge achievement gaps.

Foundational Skills

The basic, essential abilities, primarily literacy, numeracy, and core social-emotional competencies, that serve as the building blocks for future learning.

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

CGR

The percentage of students who begin as first-time ninth graders in a defined school year and graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less.

G

Grade-Level Proficiency

GLP

Indicates that a student has scored a Level 3, 4, or 5 on End-of-Grade (EOG) or End-of-Course (EOC) assessments, demonstrating sufficient or superior understanding of grade-level content standards.

I

International Baccalaureate

IB

Internationally recognized rigorous high school diploma and course program.

M

Multilingual Learner

ML

A student whose primary language is not English.

Multi-Tiered System of Support

MTSS

A school improvement framework that encompasses academic, behavioral, social, and emotional instruction and support. NC MTSS employs a systems approach using data-driven problem-solving to maximize growth for all.

N

NC HS Diploma Endorsement

Optional certifications on a student's diploma indicating focused study in career, college, or specialized areas.

NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey

TWC

A biennial survey that collects the anonymous voices of educators to determine strengths and improvement opportunities in schools and districts.

O

OCS Experience

The collective, high-quality educational journey that ensures every student in Orange County Schools is engaged, challenged, and inspired from kindergarten to graduation.

OCS Portrait of a Graduate

A shared vision that defines the knowledge, skills, and mindsets every Orange County Schools student will develop to be prepared for success after graduation.

Operations

Internal systems that provide support for learning, including transportation, School Nutrition, and school facilities.

Out-of-School Suspensions

OSS

A disciplinary action where a student is temporarily removed from the school environment for violating policies, lasting typically 1–10 days.

P

Professional Learning

PL

The continuous, collaborative process where educators enhance their knowledge, skills, and practice to improve student outcomes.

Professional Learning Community

PLC

An ongoing, collaborative process where educators work in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better student results.

S

School Performance Grade

SPG

A–F letter grades assigned annually to NC public schools, based on 80% student achievement (test scores) and 20% academic growth.

Social Emotional Learning

SEL

A strengths-based, developmental process through which children, adolescents, and adults learn skills to support healthy development and relationships.

Standard Treatment Protocol

STP

A clearly defined, step-by-step set of evidence-based instructional practices used to ensure consistent, research-based intervention.

T

Trauma Informed Practices

An approach that integrates a deep understanding of trauma's impact on learning and behavior into classroom practices.

Y

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

YRBS

A survey that helps assess behaviors in youth that impact their health now and in the future.

W

Whole-Student

A student-centered approach that emphasizes the connections between health and academic achievement and the importance of evidence-based school policies and practices.