BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

DR. ROYCE AVERY

2026



STABILIZATION. ACCOUNTABILITY. TRANSFORMATION.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025–2026 school year marked a pivotal period of stabilization, accountability, and measurable progress for Bridgeport Public Schools. Under the leadership of Dr. Royce Avery, the district addressed significant fiscal, staffing, operational, instructional, and facilities challenges while maintaining a clear focus on students.

Dr. Avery led a districtwide stabilization strategy centered on fiscal responsibility, workforce recovery, academic improvement, expanded student supports, family engagement, and long-term planning. As a result, Bridgeport Public Schools secured more than $35 million in additional state and municipal funding, obtained $108.7 million in awarded grant funding, identified or recovered more than $12 million through fiscal oversight and operational efficiencies, reduced certified staff vacancies from more than 150 positions to 41, reduced Special Education teacher vacancies from 31 to 2, implemented all 34 forensic audit recommendations, advanced a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan, expanded student support systems, and strengthened public engagement.

While important work remains, the progress achieved during the 2025–2026 school year demonstrates clear leadership impact. Dr. Avery's work strengthened district systems, restored accountability, expanded opportunities for students, and positioned Bridgeport Public Schools on a stronger foundation for continued growth.

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Bridgeport Public Schools Community,

This school year required difficult decisions, steady leadership, and a shared commitment to keeping students at the center of every conversation. When the year began, Bridgeport Public Schools faced significant challenges in staffing, finance, operations, facilities, attendance, and public trust. These challenges were real, but they also created an opportunity to rebuild with greater focus, transparency, and purpose.

Together, we strengthened systems, expanded supports, improved accountability, and created a clearer path forward for our students, staff, families, and community. The progress reflected in this report belongs to the entire Bridgeport Public Schools community.

I am proud of what we accomplished, but I am equally mindful of the work ahead. Our responsibility is to continue building a district where every student is known, supported, challenged, and prepared for success.

Thank you for your partnership, trust, and continued belief in our students.

Rooted in Purpose. Driven by Passion.

Dr. Royce Avery
Interim Superintendent

DISTRICT TURNAROUND ROADMAP

A PHASED APPROACH TO STABILIZE, RESTORE, IMPROVE, AND SUSTAIN



01
STABILIZE DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Address staffing, fiscal, operational, and systems challenges.

KEY ACTIONS

- Assess operational gaps and urgent needs
- Stabilize staffing across critical roles
- Align resources to priority needs
- strengthen core systems and processes

02
RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Strengthen financial controls, reporting systems, Board communication, and public trust.

KEY ACTIONS

- Strengthen financial controls and compliance
- Improve reporting and data transparency
- Enhance Board communication
- Rebuild public trust through openness

03
IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Focus on literacy, mathematics, science, attendance, multilingual learners, Special Education, and college/career readiness.

KEY ACTIONS

- Implement evidence-based instructional strategies
- Focus on early literacy and math proficiency
- Support multilingual learners and Special Education
- Strengthen college/career readiness pathways

04
REBUILD WORKFORCE CAPACITY

Address staffing, fiscal, operational, and systems challenges.

KEY ACTIONS

- Assess operational gaps and urgent needs
- Stabilize staffing across critical roles
- Align resources to priority needs
- Strengthen core systems and processes

05
PLAN FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Advance facilities planning, capital improvement, fiscal recovery, and strategic partnerships.

KEY ACTIONS

- Develop long-term facilities and capital plans
- Strengthen fiscal health and sustainability
- Build strategic community and business partnerships
- Monitor progress and adjust strategies

This roadmap reflects the leadership strategy used to stabilize operations, restore accountability, improve student outcomes, rebuild workforce capacity, and plan for long-term sustainability.

DISTRICTWIDE TRANSFORMATION

MEASURABLE RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Real progress. Measurable impact. Stronger schools.

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

$35.4M
additional funding secured

$108.7M
awarded grants

$12M+
recovered/identified

34
on-going implementation of audit recommendations

WORKFORCE STABILIZATION

150+
vacancies reduced to 41

31
SPED vacancies reduced to 2

6
bilingual vacancies reduced to 2

98%+
staffing in critical SPED positions

STUDENT IMPACT

16%
increase in K–2 students at/above benchmark

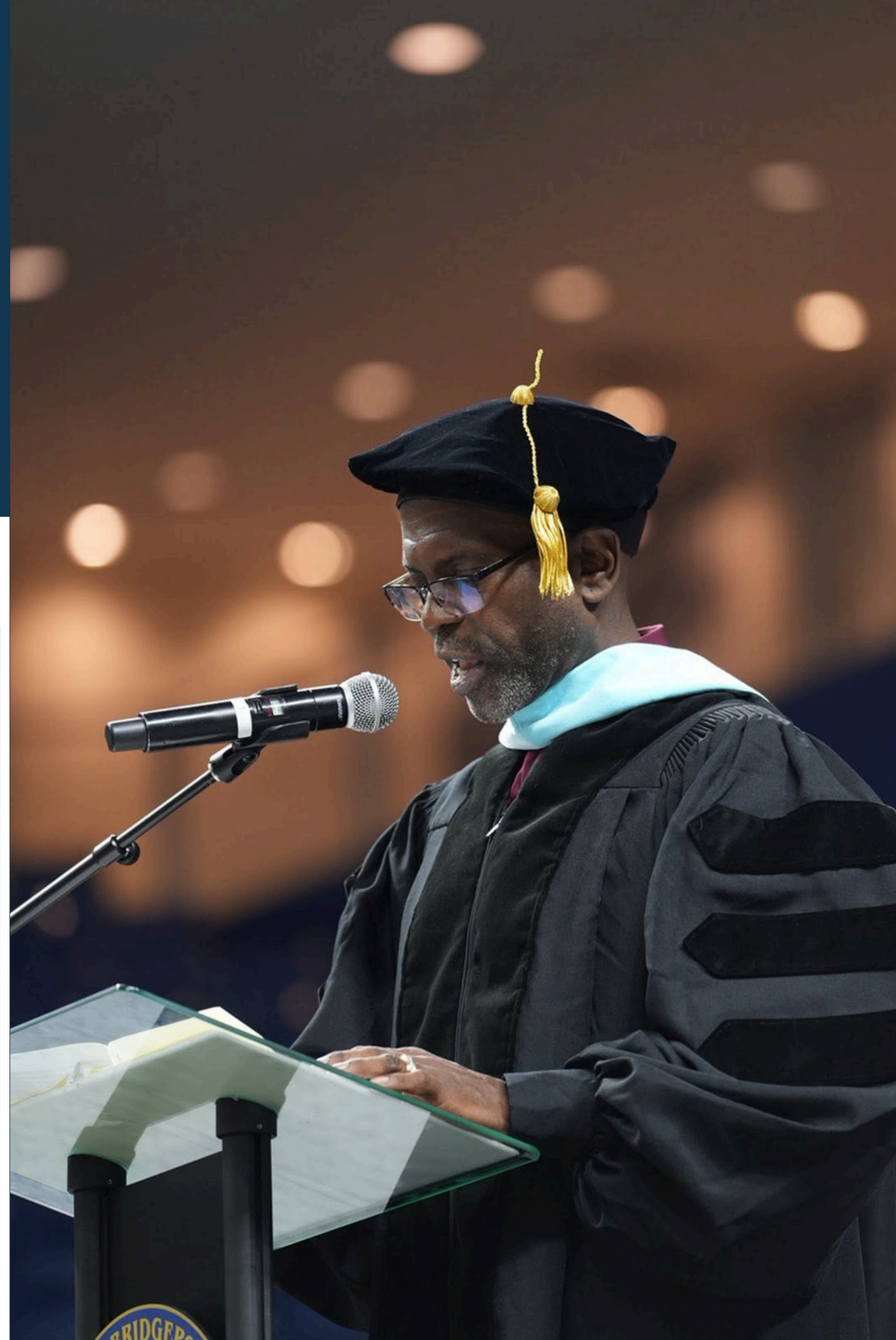
13%
decrease in K–2 students well below benchmark

4,417
college applications submitted

5,594
MLL students supported



SY 2025-2026 TO CURRENT OVERVIEW



BEGINNING OF YEAR

AREA	BEGINNING OF YEAR
Certified Vacancies	150+
Special Education Vacancies	31
Audit Findings	34 Recommendations
Facilities	No Master Plan
Funding	Significant Constraints
Attendance	Chronic Absenteeism Concerns

RESULTS AFTER ONE YEAR

AREA	CURRENT STATUS
Certified Vacancies	41
Special Education Vacancies	2
Audit Findings	Completed
Facilities	Master Plan Complete
Funding	$35M+ Secured
Adult Education	+71% Enrollment

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Avery established **district priorities** centered on:

- Academic Achievement and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainability
- Talent Recruitment and Retention
- Long-Term Strategic Planning

To support implementation and monitoring of these priorities, Dr. Avery established:

- District & School Improvement planning in 2025-2026
- Administrator & Teacher Data Teams.
- Attendance dashboards.
- Graduation monitoring systems.
- Accountability systems focused on continuous improvement.



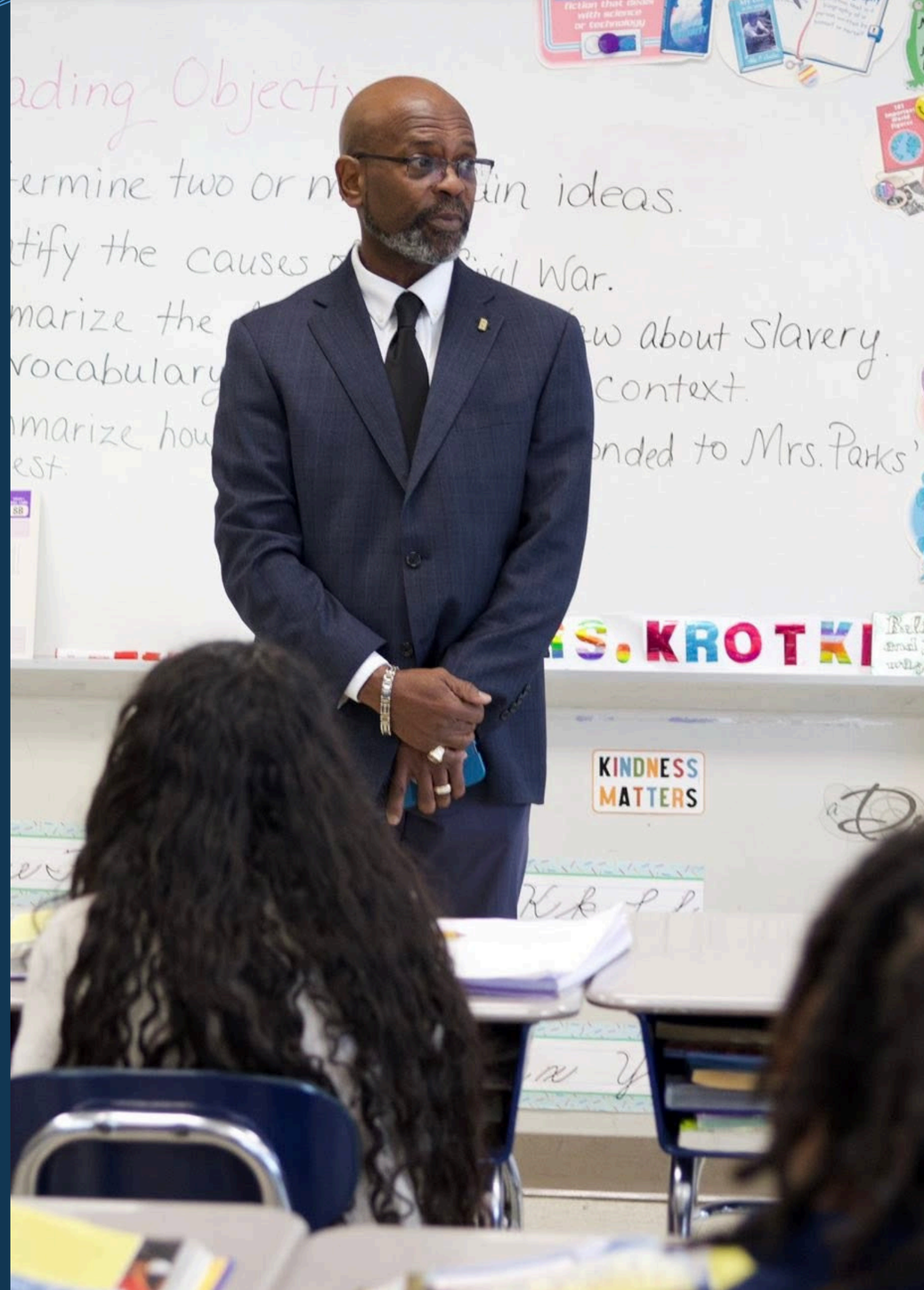
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (CONT.)

Attendance and Student Engagement

Recognizing the connection between attendance and achievement, the district **prioritized attendance improvement** through:

- **Implementation of District & School Attendance** Review Teams
- Attendance dashboards and monitoring systems.
- Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP).
- #BridgeportShowsUp and #ShowUpPowerUp campaigns.

These **efforts contributed to a 2.6% reduction in chronic absenteeism** and engaged more than 5,000 students through attendance initiatives.



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION

DISTRICT ACADEMIC RESULTS

- Barnum, Roosevelt, and Madison **Schools exited state turnaround identification status**.
- Warren Harding High School **exited turnaround identification.**
- 71% (20 of 28) **elementary schools increased ELA achievement** in state assessments for 2024-2025.
- 79% (22 of 28) elementary **schools increased mathematics** achievement in state assessments for 2024-2025.
- 100% (7 of 7) **high schools increased the percentage of students meeting grade-level standards in ELA** benchmarks for 2024-2025.
- 86% (6 of 7) **high schools increased the percentage of students meeting grade-level standards in mathematics** benchmark assessment in 2024-2025.
- 38% to 56% of **students met or exceeded expected NWEA** benchmark growth in 2025-2026.
- Grades 7–12 demonstrated a 15% increase in students reading at or above grade level in ELA benchmark in 2025-2026.

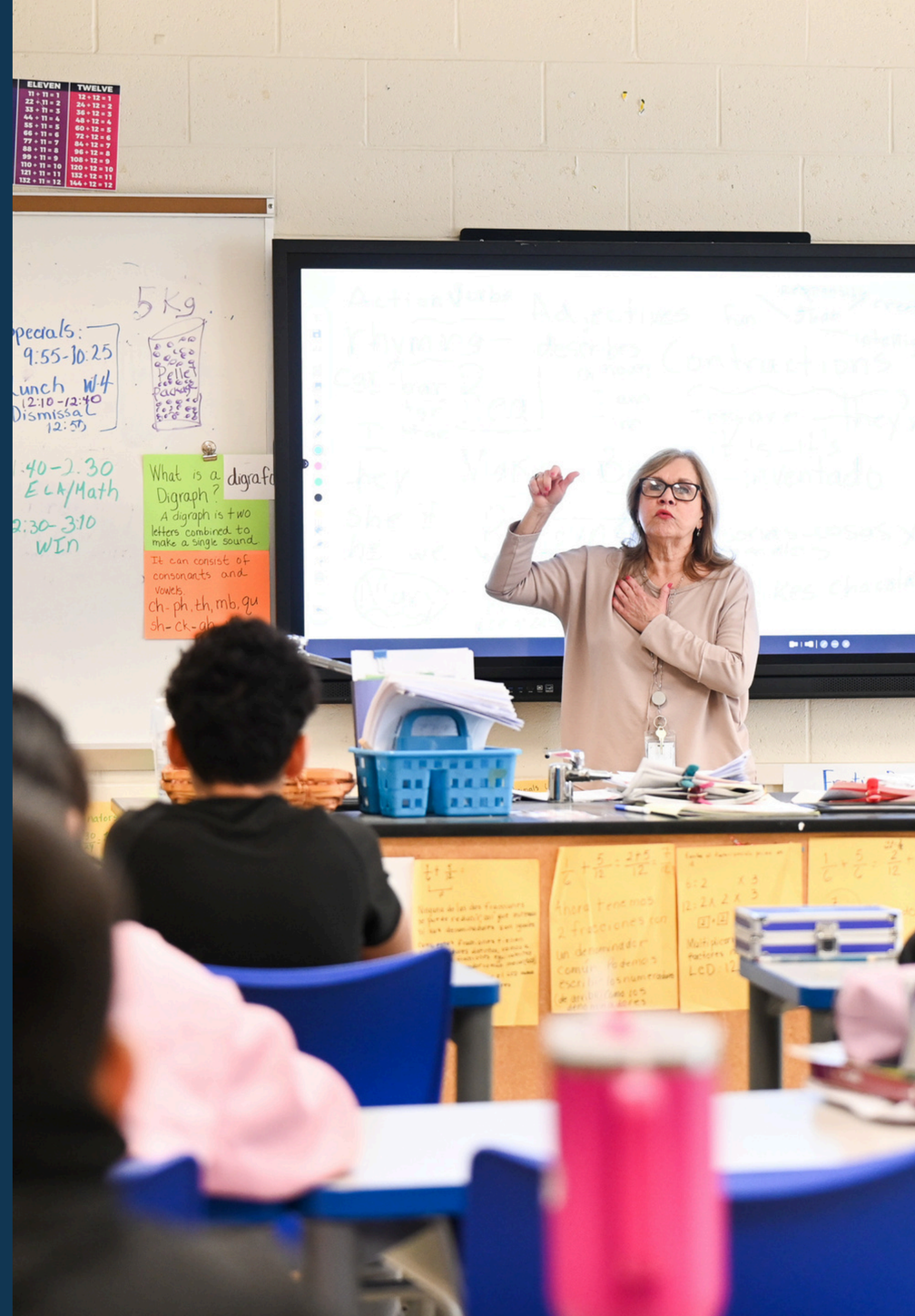


CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION (CONT.)

Under Dr. Avery's leadership, the district **strengthened curriculum alignment, instructional consistency, and academic supports** throughout the district.

Major accomplishments included:

- **Published districtwide K–12 curriculum for all content areas** to ensure instructional consistency and standards alignment across schools.
- **Implemented four years of ESL support** for High School students, including curriculum.
- **Implemented the Connecticut Literacy Model** to strengthen evidence-based literacy instruction districtwide.
- **Expanded WIN (What I Need) intervention blocks and targeted academic supports** to address student learning needs.



SUPERVISION AND HUMAN CAPITAL

One of the districts most significant accomplishments was workforce stabilization.

Results included:

- **Reduction of certified staff vacancies** from 150+ positions to 41.
- **Reduction of Special Education teacher vacancies** from 31 positions to 2.
- **Reduction of bilingual vacancies** from 6 positions to 2.
- More than 98% staffing in critical Special Education positions.
- **Expanded recruitment partnerships** with colleges and universities.
- Strengthened onboarding and support systems.
- Expanded educator coaching and mentoring opportunities.

The **district strengthened principal coaching, leadership accountability systems, and school improvement planning** structures to support effective supervision and continuous growth.



SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

The district **prioritized improving services, programming, compliance, and family engagement** for students with disabilities.

Major accomplishments included:

- **Secured and advanced a new $74 million** Bridgeport Special Education Center serving up to 260 students.
- **Reduced Special Education teacher vacancies** by 98%.
- Expanded the Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- **Conducted a districtwide Special Education Listening** and Learning Tour.
- Implemented **districtwide IEP Quality Training.**



SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP (CONT.)

Major accomplishments included:

- Strengthened oversight of out-of-district placements.
- **Expanded administrator professional learning** focused on special education law, least restrictive environment requirements, instructional supports, and compliance.
- Improved Medicaid reimbursement and compliance systems.



STUDENT SERVICES

Dr. Avery's **leadership strengthened student support systems** by expanding access to counseling, mental health, housing, family resource, crisis response, and behavioral supports. These systems helped ensure that students were supported academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

Major accomplishments included:

- Services provided to 343 students experiencing homelessness.
- Expansion of Family Resource Center programming.
- Expanded mental health and trauma-informed supports.
- Community Resiliency Model implementation.
- Crisis response and intervention services.



ADULT EDUCATION, COLLEGE, CAREER, AND WORKFORCE READINESS

Modernized Adult Education through expanded workforce pathways, digital literacy programming, and career partnerships, contributing to a 71% increase in enrollment, 51% increase in graduates, and 68% increase in measurable skill gains.

Results included:

- **Increased Graduates** from 43 to 65 students (51% increase)
- **Measurable Skill Gains increased** by 68%
- Expanded Digital Literacy & workforce readiness programming



FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Fiscal stabilization and accountability represented some of the most significant accomplishments of the year.

Funding and Resource Development

The district secured:

- $35.4 million in additional state, local and municipal funding.
- $108.7 million in awarded grants.

Grant funding increased by 11.6% over the previous year.



FINANCE & BUDGET

ADDITIONAL STATE FUNDING SECURED

+ $10,373,486 ONE-TIME MUNICIPAL STABILIZATION GRANT

+ $15,015,199 ADDITIONAL STATE EDUCATION FUNDS

= $25,388,685

ADDITIONAL LOCAL FUNDING SECURED

+ $10 MILLION

TOTAL SECURED:

= $35,388,685

THANK YOU

TO
MAYOR JOSEPH P. GANIM
BRIDGEPORT DELEGATION
CITY COUNCIL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
& COMMUNITY!



FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

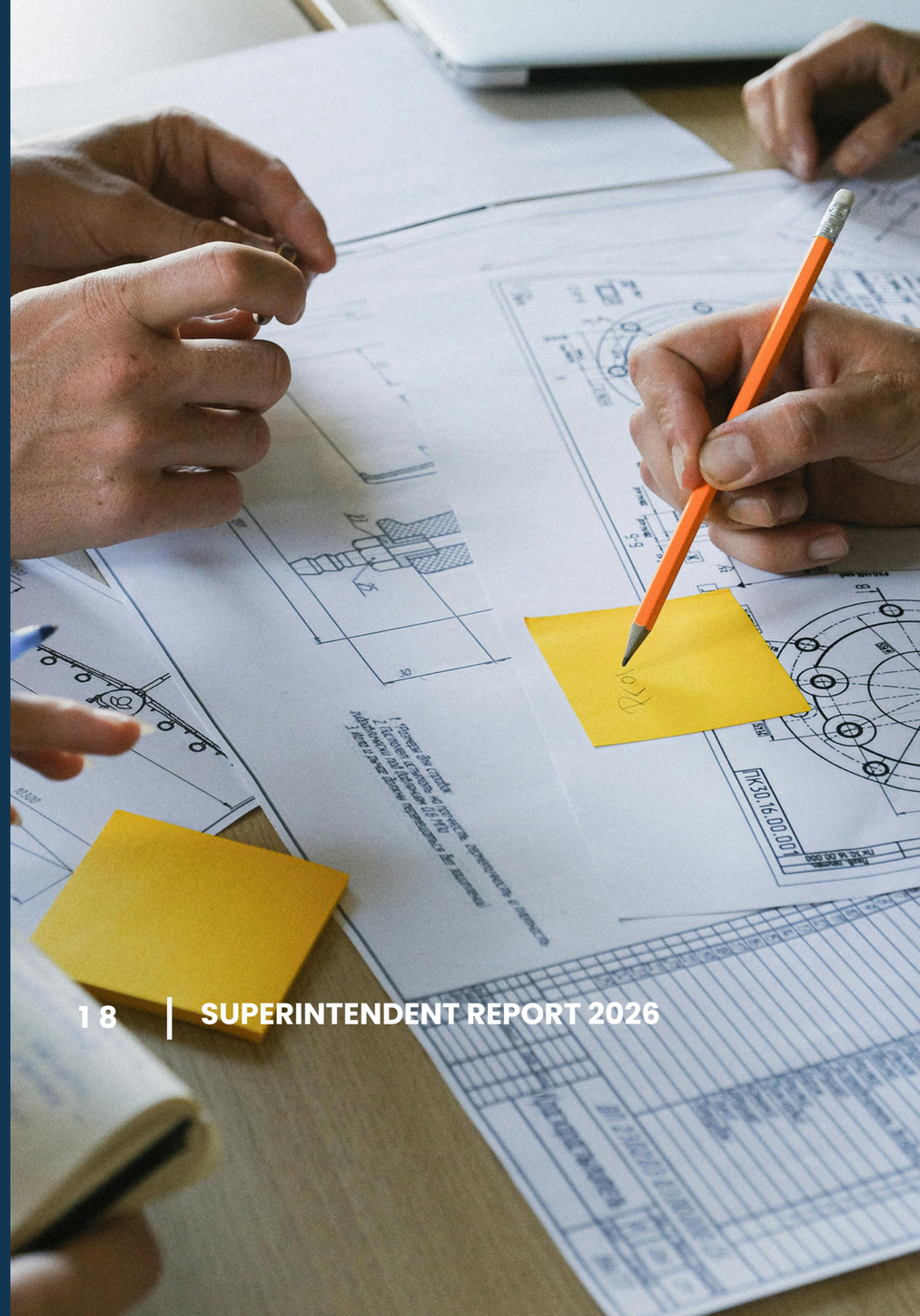
Under Dr. Avery's leadership, Bridgeport Public Schools strengthened accountability and financial oversight through:

- **On-going Implementation of all 34 forensic audit** recommendations
- Development of a more structured and transparent budget process
- Inclusion of school leaders in budget development
- **Establishment of a School-Based Allocation Model** grounded in equity, accountability, transparency, and empowerment



FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY (CONT.)

- Strengthened reporting systems and internal controls.
- Completion of more than 200 grant financial reports.
- Review of major vendor contracts and purchasing practices.
- Expansion of financial monitoring and reporting systems.



FISCAL RECOVERY AND COST SAVINGS

The district identified and **recovered more than $12 million** through:

- Medicaid reimbursement improvements
- Special Education excess-cost reimbursement recovery
- Healthcare claims reviews
- Staffing efficiencies
- Strengthened fiscal oversight systems



FISCAL RECOVERY AND COST SAVINGS (CONT.)

ADDITIONAL COST SAVINGS

- **Generated approximately $163,909** in annual transportation savings through contract efficiencies.

- Completed LED lighting upgrades in more than 26 schools and district facilities, **generating approximately $988,333** in projected **annual savings**.

- **Expanded digital systems and operational controls** to improve purchasing, inventory management, reporting, and accountability.



FACILITIES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING

The plan:

- Evaluated all 37 district facilities
- Assessed building conditions and enrollment trends
- Identified approximately $702.5 million in facility needs
- Established a roadmap for modernization and educational alignment
- Advancement of the East End School Project, a proposed $125 million PreK–8 facility serving approximately 750 students

Building upon this work, Dr. Avery worked collaboratively with the Board of Education and community stakeholders to develop a districtwide capital investment strategy.

Under his leadership, the Board approved a five-year capital improvement plan totaling approximately $116 million, including approximately $12.6 million in FY27 priority projects.



FACILITIES, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Major accomplishments included:

- **Expansion of STEM Learning Center** initiatives
- Expansion of safety and security infrastructure improvements

- **Establishment of the Central Enrollment Center** in collaboration with CT State Housatonic Community College to improve family access and enrollment **services supporting over 4,000 families.**



COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPARENCY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Major accomplishments included:

- Increasing public reporting on district initiatives and outcomes
- Launching the **Bridgeport Public Schools Podcast with 1,000 views**
- Providing regular superintendent updates through multiple communication platforms
- **Establishing the Community Partner Advisory Council** with **more than 30 participating organizations**
- **Expanding the Special Education Advisory Council** to 68 participating members
- **Conducting extensive listening sessions** with students, families, staff, and community stakeholders to inform district improvement efforts and address challenges



COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPARENCY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

State of the Schools Address

Dr. Avery **hosted Bridgeport Public Schools' first State of the Schools Address** at CT State Housatonic Community College.

The event brought together families, educators, elected officials, community partners, business leaders, and stakeholders to review district accomplishments, challenges, strategic priorities, and future goals while establishing a new standard of transparency and public accountability.



COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPARENCY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

ADVOCACY

In collaboration with the **Board of Education**, the district led multiple advocacy efforts in 2026 to promote equitable funding and support for Bridgeport Public Schools:

- **Attended state legislative hearings and City Council sessions** to advocate for increased funding
- **Organized student advocacy with over 100 students** in Hartford several times throughout legislative session
- **Supported over 500 public testimonies**, many from students and families focused on equitable school funding
- **Urged state leaders to lift financial guardrails to allow reserve funds** to support underfunded districts



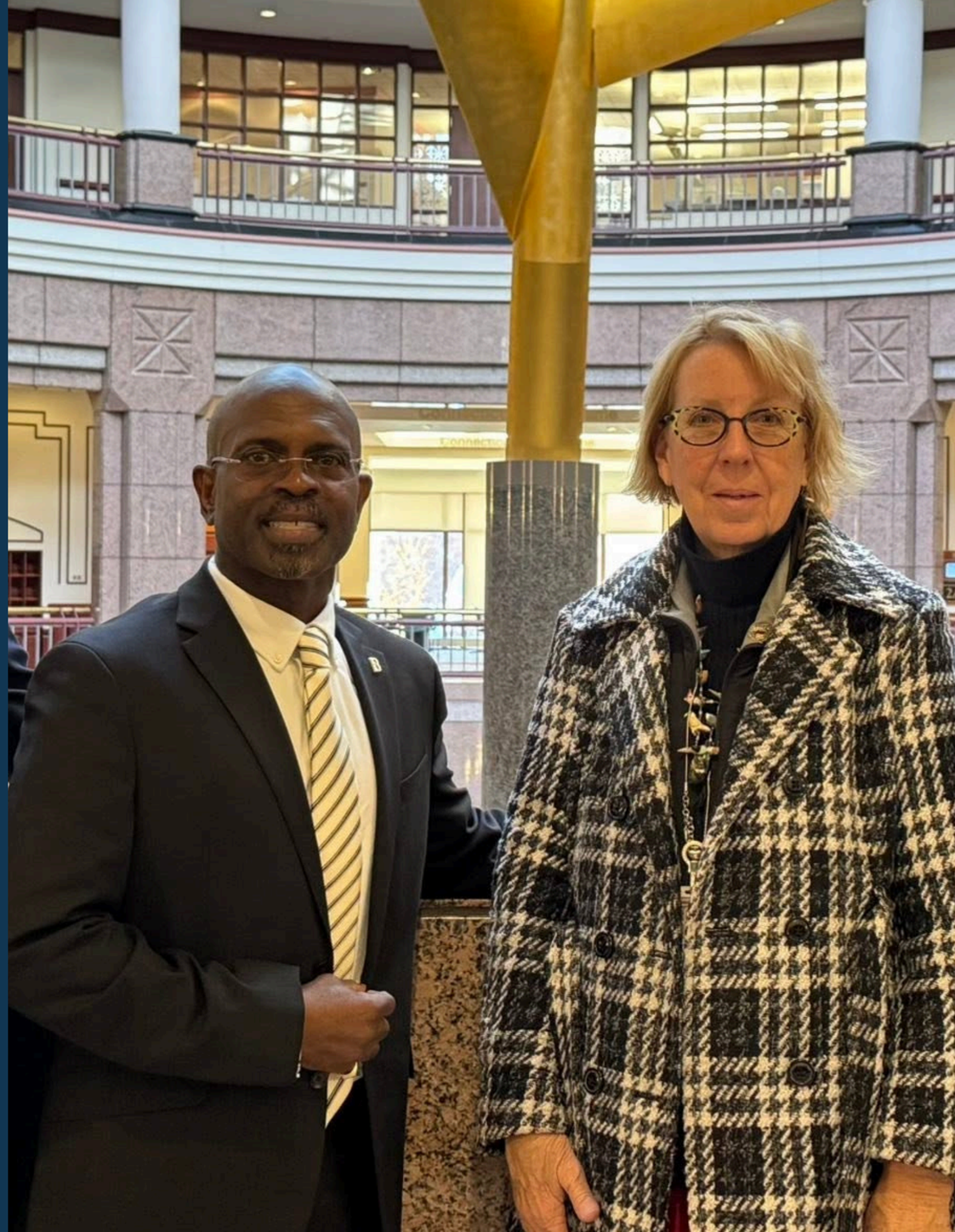
COMMUNICATIONS,TRANSPARENCY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

ADVOCACY

- **Coordinated bi-weekly meetings with State legislative delegation and the Mayor's office** to communicate district financial challenges

- **Prioritized and support for advocacy efforts** with AD HOC Advocacy committee

- **Utilized social media, district podcast and other district communication tools** to share student testimony, and communicate the financial challenges of the district



COMMUNITY RELATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND ADVOCACY

Dr. Avery significantly expanded stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships.

Major accomplishments included:

- Establishment of the Community Partner Advisory Council (monthly)

- Partnerships with colleges, universities, nonprofits, healthcare organizations, workforce agencies, and businesses



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

External Consultants

- Hill for Literacy coaching
- HMH coaching for Math
- ML Summit 2026
- IEP Quality Traning for admin & teachers
- WJ-V assessment training
- Support provided by Connecticut State Department of Education

Internal Professional Learning

- Back-to-School trainining for admin & teachers
- Admin council & cohorts (monthly)
- District literacy & Math leadership meetings (quarterly)
- Created a library of on demand videos for teachers
- Patricipated in colleague led professional learning for teacher choice
- Over 900 classroom visits for coaching and support



BOARD RELATIONS, GOVERNANCE, AND LEADERSHIP

Dr. Avery worked collaboratively with the Board of Education to **strengthen governance, accountability, strategic planning, and long-term sustainability**. His leadership supported clearer communication, stronger alignment between district priorities and Board goals, and improved structures for monitoring progress.

Evidence includes:

- **Participated in all state-mandated Board training** sessions
- **Weekly meetings** with individual Board members
- **Support for policy review** and governance updates
- **Collaboration with the Board on fiscal advocacy, facilities planning, and districtwide accountability systems**





CONCLUSION

The 2025–2026 school year required urgent leadership, disciplined decision-making, and a clear commitment to students. Dr. Royce Avery led Bridgeport Public Schools through a year of stabilization and measurable progress by strengthening fiscal oversight, reducing critical staffing vacancies, advancing student achievement systems, expanding family and community engagement, improving Special Education supports, and establishing long-term facilities and capital planning.

The work completed this year does not eliminate the challenges ahead. Student achievement must continue to improve, financial pressures remain, and the district must sustain its focus on accountability, equity, and continuous improvement. However, the evidence presented in this report demonstrates that Dr. Avery's leadership produced meaningful progress and positioned Bridgeport Public Schools on a stronger foundation for the future.