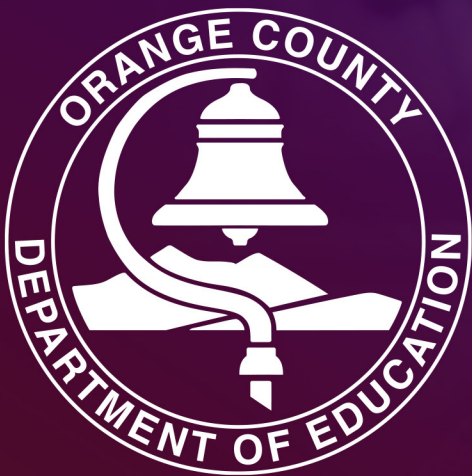


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Strategic Plan for Educational Success through 2030



Stefan Bean, Ed.D.
Orange County Superintendent of Schools



Our path forward:

Introducing the 5-3-1 Strategic Plan

Throughout my life, I’ve experienced firsthand the power of education, compassion and opportunity.

Born in Saigon during the Vietnam War, I was abandoned as an infant after contracting polio and placed in an orphanage. I was airlifted to the United States through Operation Babylift, where I entered the foster care system and later started school as an English learner and a student with a disability.

Educators and communities shaped my path. A sixth-grade teacher recognized my voice and encouraged me to speak with confidence. In high school, four friends carried my wheelchair upstairs each day so I could attend a class that wasn’t accessible. These experiences reinforced a simple truth: Education is more than instruction. It’s about the people who open doors, remove barriers and help students see their own potential.

That belief is at the heart of our 5-3-1 Strategic Plan, a framework built around five key initiatives, three objectives to strengthen district partnerships and one bold goal to transform student outcomes.

In the following pages, you’ll find an overview of our five initiatives, from expanding career technical education for our most vulnerable students to fostering emotional intelligence, making schools safer and integrating new technologies like AI.

We also outline our commitments to Orange County’s 28 districts, including fiscal and legislative guidance, academic excellence and leadership support. And finally, our one big, audacious goal serves as a unifying vision for transformative progress within our ACCESS schools.

This plan was shaped by insights from educators, superintendents and community partners across the county, and it’s a reflection of OCDE’s dedication to meeting the evolving needs of students and families.

As we embark on this new chapter, I am grateful for your partnership and look forward to working together to bring the 5-3-1 Strategic Plan to life – paving the way for meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your commitment and support.

Stefan Bean, Ed.D.
Orange County Superintendent of Schools



Vision

Orange County students will lead the nation in college and career readiness and success.

Mission

The mission of the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) is to ensure that all students are equipped with the competencies they need to thrive in the 21st century.

Values

OCDE is dedicated to the fundamental human values of respect, responsibility, integrity and professional ethics. Our priority is service to students, schools, districts, families and community members. We provide a safe, caring, courteous and professional environment that fosters collaborative work and individual development for our employees. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for the highest level of performance, efficiency, resource management and professionalism.

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KEY INITIATIVES



Fostering Emotional Intelligence

OCDE will cultivate empathy among leaders, teachers and students to foster effective communication and well-being. Through targeted programs, OCDE aims to help students and educators manage emotions, build better relationships and create positive learning environments. Some of the main benefits of emotional intelligence in schools include: improved academic performance, enhanced social skills, better mental health, resilience and adaptability, stronger teacher-student relationships, and positive school culture.

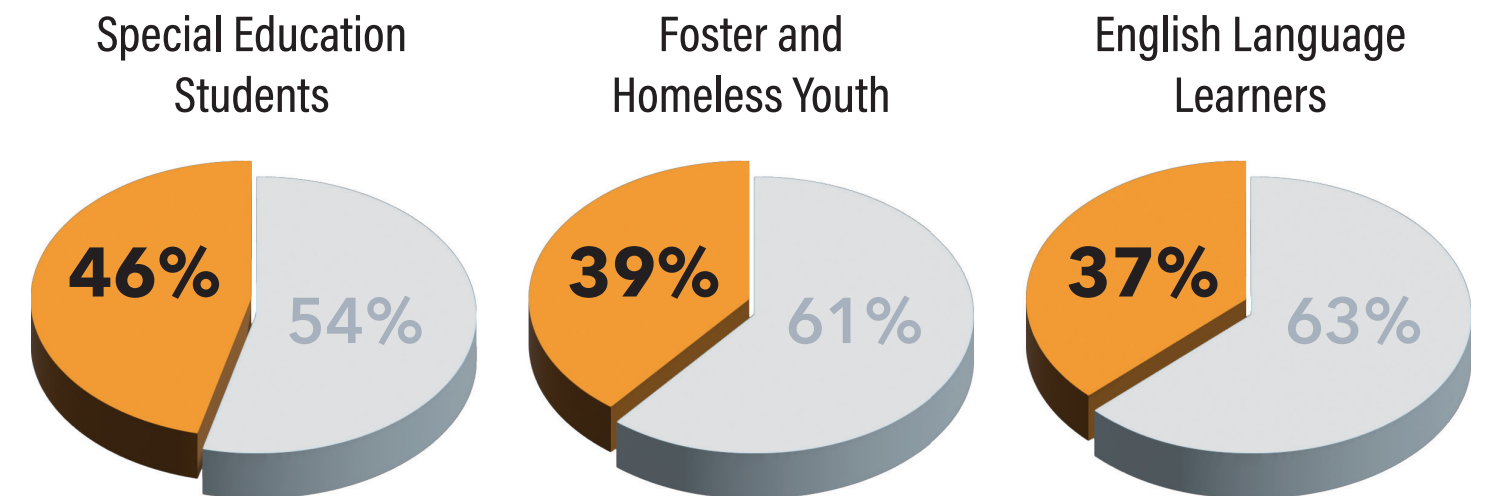
Point Person: Stacy Deeble-Reynolds, Executive Director, Student Initiatives, Partnerships and Events. sdeeble-reynolds@ocde.us

Enhancing Career Technical Education (CTE) for Vulnerable Students

In Orange County, we are strengthening career and technical education to support students facing barriers to education and career advancement. This initiative seeks to expand CTE and sharpen our focus on inclusivity, ensuring all students have access to hands-on, career-focused learning from elementary through high school. Through real-world experiences like job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships in high-demand industries, and in collaboration with districts and employers, OCDE is building pathways that connect CTE programs with college, credentials, apprenticeships and employment. This integrated approach is designed to empower all learners to achieve educational and career success.

Point Person: Kathy Boyd, Executive Director, Career Education and Postsecondary Advancement. kboyd@ocde.us

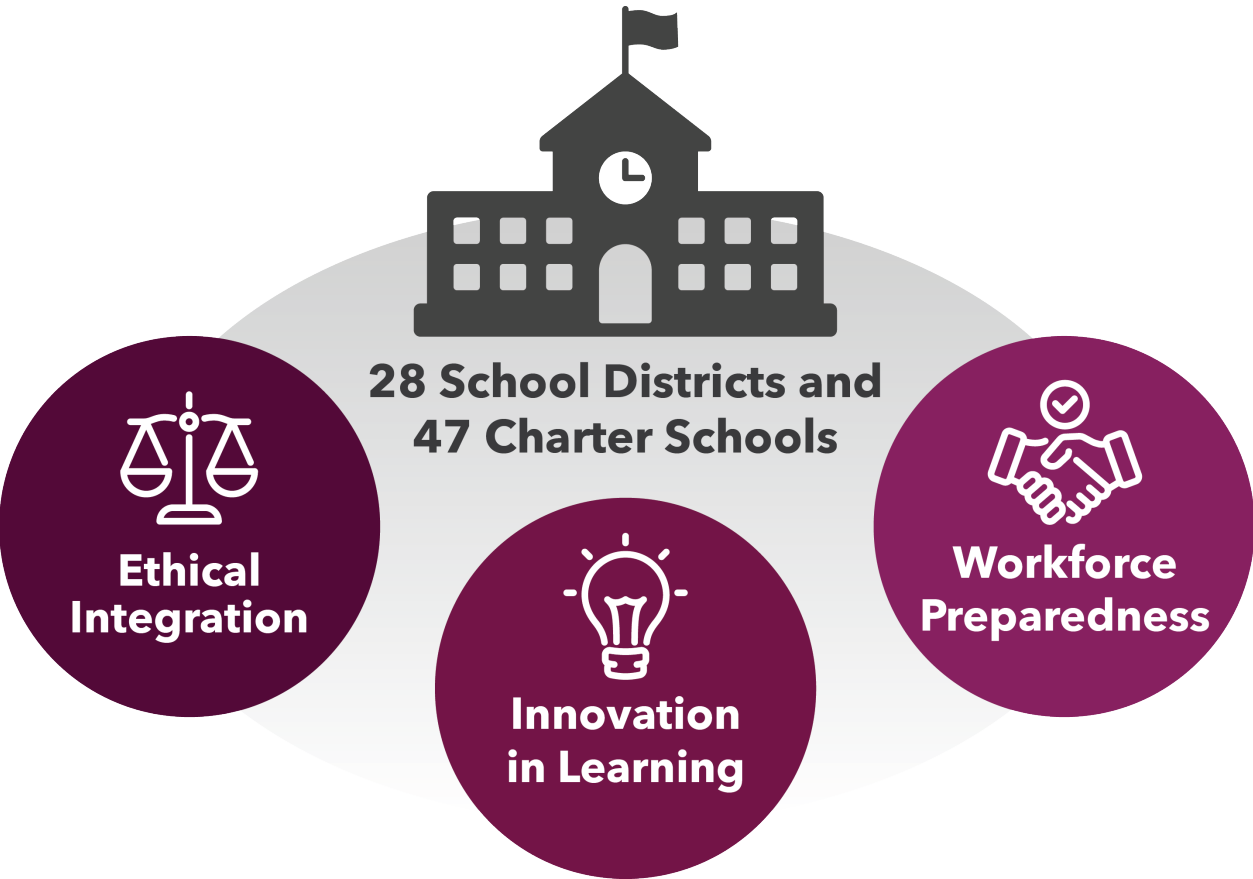
Students in CTE Programs



Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We envision a future where artificial intelligence enhances learning, empowers educators and prepares students for a rapidly evolving world. Our approach is guided by three powerful principles: ethical approaches to integration, innovation in learning environments and experiences, and workforce preparedness and industry relevance. We commit, in our three-pronged approach, to protect student data, expand equitable access to learning, support career and workforce development and use AI tools responsibly with fairness and transparency. Innovation in education allows AI to enhance creativity, improve efficiency and personalize learning while streamlining our work. By embracing these principles, we ensure AI strengthens education, makes our work more effective and supports the success of the 28 school districts we serve.

Point Person: Dr. Jonathan Swanson, Executive Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Academic Enrichment. jswanson@ocde.us



Ensuring Student and School Safety

OCDE is committed to enhancing student and school safety by working closely with local law enforcement and school districts across the county to address key safety needs. This collaborative effort aims to integrate comprehensive protocols on essential topics such as emergency response, bullying prevention, mental health support and crisis intervention, tailored to the unique needs of each school community. The initiative emphasizes preparedness through regular drills, secure access to critical information, and thorough training on threat assessment, conflict resolution and safe evacuation procedures. By prioritizing these elements, OCDE helps ensure a safe, supportive and resilient learning environment for all students and staff.

Point Person: Randy Styner, Director of Safety, Risk and Emergency Management, rstyner@ocde.us; Dennis Cole, OCDE Chief of Staff. dcole@ocde.us



Innovation

Implementation of a new strategy or novel application of strategies designed to address an unmet need in an educational context. Innovative practices improve efficiency or student outcomes. While innovative practices may not be evidence-based, innovations should be grounded in theory, responsive to the needs of the population of interest, and capable of producing sustainable, scalable, and replicable change.

Point Person: Dr. Diane Ehrle, Director, Continuous Improvement Team. dehrle@ocde.us

3 SUPPORT OBJECTIVES



Leadership Support for Districts and Charters

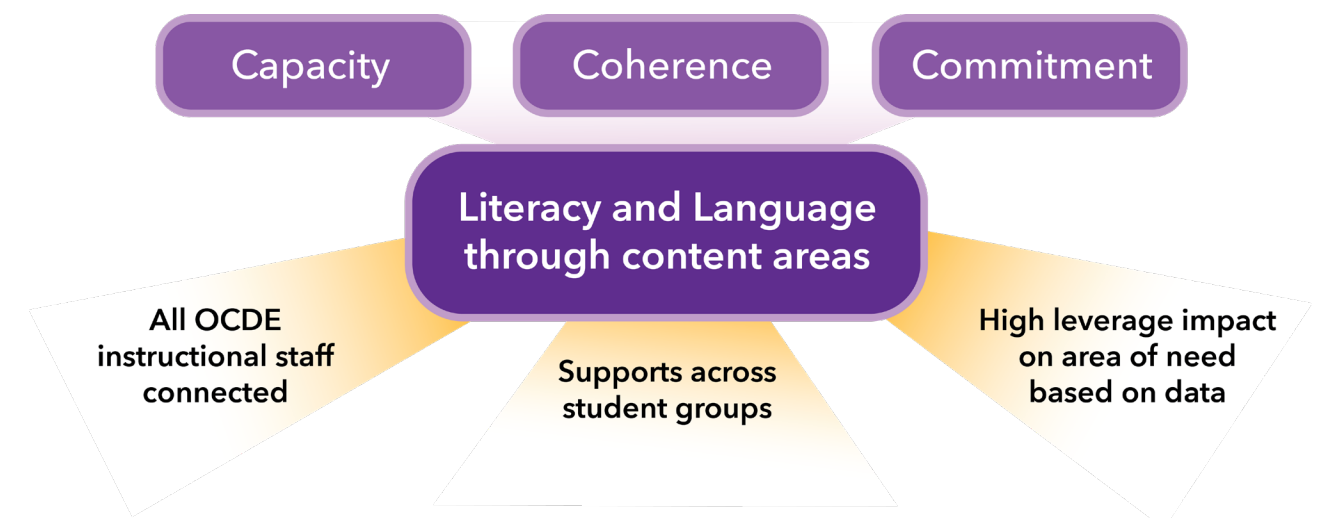
OCDE will create customized supports to address the unique challenges faced by our 28 districts and their superintendents, along with leaders of our county's charter schools. We offer expert guidance, resources and professional learning tailored to each district's specific leadership needs. By working closely with local superintendents, building strong partnerships and fostering collaboration, OCDE helps ensure all districts have the leadership support they need to deliver high-quality education to every student.

Point Persons: Dr. Stefan Bean, Orange County Superintendent of Schools. sbean@ocde.us; Terry Walker, Senior Advisor, District Relations. twalker@ocde.us

Supporting Instruction and Literacy

Language is central to learning and connection, forming the basis of success across all subjects. Literacy practices develop communication skills and unlock complex areas like math and science. By addressing reading, writing, speaking, and listening, educators help both new and long-term English learners gain fluency. This well-rounded, science-based approach enables students to engage fully and thrive in diverse academic settings.

Point Persons: Dr. Sandra Lee, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services. shlee@ocde.us; Trish Walsh, Director, Academic Content and Instructional Support. twalsh@ocde.us



System Support and Specialized Guidance

OCDE offers responsive support to help districts navigate educational policies, manage resources and meet local, state and federal requirements. This includes legal, legislative and fiscal guidance, along with expertise in information technology, communications and high-quality special education services. Through training, technical assistance and expert consultation, OCDE partners with districts to ensure all students – including those with disabilities – receive the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Point Persons: Dean West, Associate Superintendent, Business Services. dwest@ocde.us; Greg Rolen, General Counsel, Legal Services. grolen@ocde.us

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BIG AUDACIOUS GOAL



2030 Vision for OCDE Students

By 2030, the Orange County Department of Education's ACCESS and Connections programs will empower every student we serve to thrive academically, socially and emotionally in safe, inclusive and innovative learning environments. Through personalized instruction, career pathways and emerging technology, students will develop practical skills, resilience and confidence to succeed in the real world. Working in partnership with families and communities, ACCESS and Connections will expand career and technical education, strengthen mental and physical health supports and integrate social-emotional learning to foster leadership, financial literacy and cultural awareness. With a focus on equity, engagement and innovation, we will prepare students to lead with purpose in an ever-changing world.

Point Persons: Dr. Stefan Bean, Orange County Superintendent of Schools. sbean@ocde.us; Dr. Maria Martinez-Poulin, Chief of ACCESS. mpoulin@ocde.us; Analee Kredel, Associate Superintendent of Connections. akredel@ocde.us

Goal Setting

- Career Readiness and CTE Pathways
- Personalized, Rigorous Instruction
- Safety, Engagement and Attendance
- SEL and Resilience
- Practical Life Skills and Financial Literacy

Continuous Improvement

Student Outcomes

- Academic growth
- Real-world skills
- Resilience and confidence
- Leadership
- Financial literacy
- Cultural awareness
- Sense of purpose

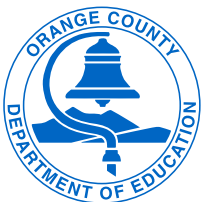
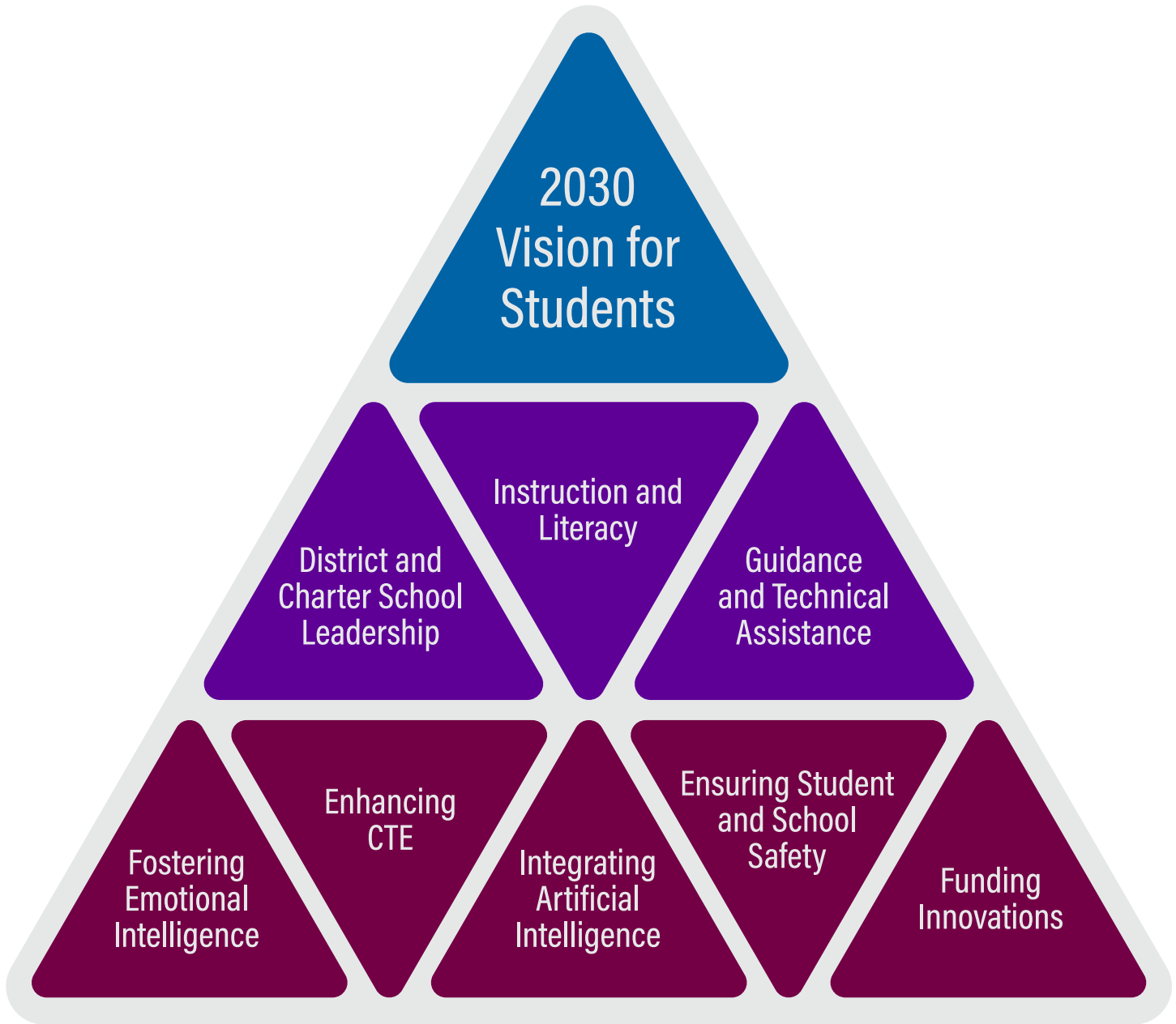
Focus Area: Chronic Absenteeism

OCDE will play a pivotal role in reducing chronic absenteeism by providing schools with targeted resources, data analysis and strategic support for early identification of students who are at risk. Through collaboration with district leaders, community organizations and families, the department can foster engagement initiatives and implement evidence-based practices to ensure students remain consistently connected to their educational journeys.

Point Persons: Dr. Kimberly Benaraw, Associate Superintendent, Student Services and Programs. kbenaraw@ocde.us; Robin Mundschau, Director, Student Services and Programs. rmundschau@ocde.us

Orange County Department of Education

5-3-1 Strategic Plan



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County Superintendent of Schools

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