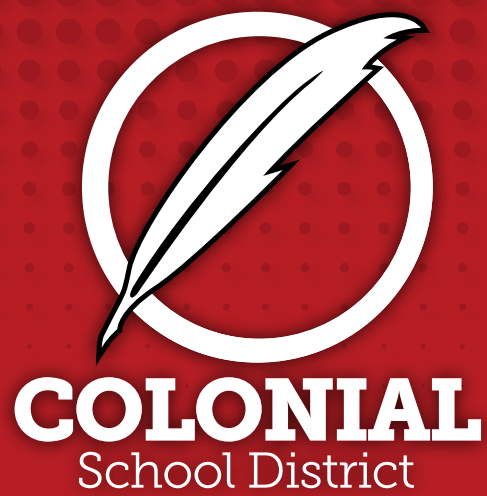




WE are Bold.

WE are Inclusive.

WE are Authentic.

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2026-2031**





Dear Colonial Nation,

It is with tremendous joy that I present the Colonial School District's Strategic Plan. This five-year plan sets the path towards success for our students, families, district, and larger community; and outlines the body of work in which we will engage.

The vision, mission, core values, priorities, and measurable goals detailed in this document set Colonial's course for the next five years of continuous improvement. The plan's development truly embodies the Power of WE and reflects more than a year of hard work and commitment during a process that was a collective effort of all stakeholders; including students, staff, and parents. The plan builds off the successes and learnings from the prior plan and will serve as a foundation for Colonial School District's effort to improve outcomes for each and every student in the years to come.

Five years ago, I boldly proclaimed that we will create a school district that all families choose for the education of their children, and a district that will be recognized as a premier workplace in the MidAtlantic region. While we have made great strides to reach this goal, we still have room for improvement. This strategic plan will guide our work and bring us closer to that vision.

I encourage you to take time to review the plan, ask questions and seek opportunities to contribute to the Power of WE.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeffrey Menzer".

By the Numbers



8,375
STUDENTS
from prek-12



6,600
STUDENTS
transported at least
one way each day

100%

OF STUDENTS

receive breakfast and lunch at no cost



1,640

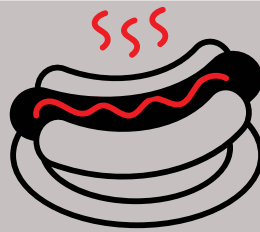
STAFF

impacting student lives
each day



4,256

BREAKFAST MEALS
served each day



5,987

LUNCH MEALS
served each day



\$52,663 - \$114,688

Teacher Pay Range

\$83,675

Average Teacher Salary



Colonial School District serves students and families across

78.8 SQUARE MILES

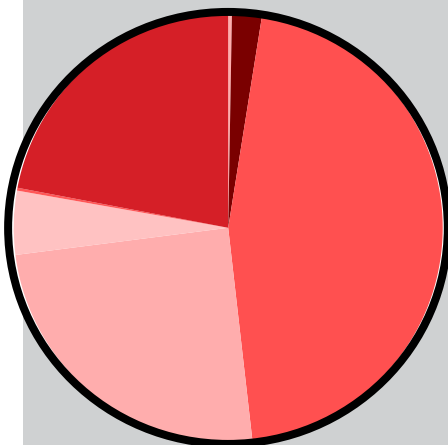
*That's over 2.19 billion square feet of
New Castle County!*



90%

GRADUATION RATE

* After completion of summer school



Student Diversity

- White or Caucasian 22%
- Multi-Racial 4.8%
- Hispanic or Latino 24.8%
- Black / African American . . 45.7%
- Asian American 2.2%



PREK STUDENT POPULATION

77% (283)
of students
have an
identified
disability

23% (85)
of students
have no
identified
disability

Our Vision



To empower every student to discover their passions and talents to shape their futures and enrich their communities.

Our Mission



In Colonial WE provide safe and nurturing learning environments.

- **WE** act with courage and pride to take calculated risks in order to achieve ambitious goals.
- **WE** create and champion the dignity and belonging of every individual.
- **WE** lead with integrity to serve students, staff, families and the community.

Core Principles



Bold

Inclusive

Authentic

"Colonial has shown my family that education is a shared responsibility. Through the Power of WE, our children are gaining the skills and support they need to succeed in school and in life."

- Colonial Parent

Our Schools



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Carrie Downie Elementary
- Castle Hills Elementary
- Harry O. Eisenberg Elementary
- New Castle Elementary
- Kathleen H. Wibur Elementary
- Pleasantville Elementary
- Southern Elementary
- Wilmington Manor Elementary



MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- Calvin R. McCullough Middle School
- George Read Middle School
- Gunning Bedford Middle School



HIGH SCHOOL

- William Penn High School



SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS

- Colonial Early Education Program (CEEP)
- John G. Leach School



Strategic Plan Process

The creation of the Colonial School District (CSD) Strategic Plan was a collaborative, yearlong effort involving more than 75 stakeholders, including various work groups and community members. The process incorporated surveys, focus groups, and data analyses to ensure broad input and informed decision-making. Progress from the Strategic Plan team was regularly communicated during the monthly public session School Board meetings. Stakeholder feedback and data guided the team's work throughout the journey. Following multiple revisions and recommendations from the community, the Colonial School District formally adopted the 2026–2031 Strategic Plan, which will guide the district toward academic success for all students.

Phase 1:
Planning & Preparation
(Summer-Early Fall 2025)



Phase 2:
Engagement & Discovery
(Fall 2025)



Phase 3:
Drafting the Strategic Plan
(Winter 2025-2026)



Phase 4:
Final Review & Approval
(March 2026)



Phase 5:
Implementation & Progress Monitoring
(Ongoing)





Our District

The Colonial School District was officially established in 1981 when the New Castle County School District was divided into several smaller districts as a part of a statewide initiative to create racially balanced schools. Today, the Colonial School District serves approximately 8,300 culturally diverse students, providing inclusive, high-quality education to students living in New Castle, Delaware City, Port Penn, St. Georges, and parts of Bear and Wilmington. The district comprises one high school, three middle schools, eight elementary schools, one preschool, and one school that specializes in educating children throughout New Castle County who have severe physical and cognitive disabilities.



The foundation for students begins in Colonial's preschool and elementary schools, where students are prepared to matriculate through a robust curriculum that prioritizes early literacy and academic growth. Robust curriculum and a variety of extracurriculars continue into our middle schools, where our teachers and staff continue to foster each student's interests and talents to prepare them for success at William Penn High School. In addition to traditional classroom instruction, Colonial offers a range of programs and enrichment opportunities that enhance learning, foster student passions, and reflect our commitment to meeting the needs of every learner. Students at all Colonial schools are supported by compassionate certified teachers and

staff who are dedicated to meeting their individual needs.

Recognizing the importance of the whole child, Colonial provides School-Based Health Center (SBHC) access in all Elementary Schools, one Middle School, and William Penn High School. SBHCs support students' medical and social-emotional health in partnership with Delaware hospital systems. In partnership with the Food Bank of Delaware, Colonial hosts food pantries in schools across the district and works with both private and public agencies to serve all Colonial families and ensure that every student from preschool to High School has the resources needed to succeed and graduate.

Colonial Nation, as it is affectionately called, thrives on its connections to families, along with business and community partnerships. Many graduates return to work in the district as support staff, teachers and administrators. Educators are strongly encouraged to achieve advanced degrees and certifications and receive additional training through monthly professional development sessions held during the school year. In recent history, two accomplished educators received the top honors in public education by being named Delaware's Teacher of the Year. "The Power of WE" is the mantra for Colonial Nation. By working with students, their families, and our partners, Colonial School District empowers every student to grow as an individual and enrich and give back to our community.



The trowel used in laying the cornerstone of William Penn High School in 1930.



Literacy and Learning

PRIORITY STATEMENT:

WE will ensure every student can read, write, think critically, and communicate effectively.

EQUITY STATEMENT:

Strong literacy skills are an equity lever that ensures all students have access to grade-level content, post-secondary opportunities, and meaningful participation in society.



FOCUS AREA 1:

WE will integrate literacy across content areas by enacting our District Literacy Vision within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Goal 1:

District Wide Literacy Integration

By the end of the 2031 school year, 100% of schools will implement a shared, district-wide approach to reading, writing, speaking, and listening across content areas (English Language Arts, Science, Exploratory, and Career and Technical Education Math, Social Studies, classrooms) and a 10% increase in student engagement with complex texts and academic language as measured by:

- Curriculum guidance documents
- Professional learning opportunities
- District created assessments
- Instructional walkthrough data

Goal 2:

Student Literacy Outcomes

By the end of the 2031 school year, students will demonstrate 20% improvement within literacy outcomes across content areas as measured by state and local assessments.

FOCUS AREA 2:

WE will strengthen instructional practice by pairing high-quality instructional materials with sustained high quality professional learning and coaching, while intentionally partnering with families and the broader community.

Goal 1:

High Quality Instructional Materials

By the end of the 2031 school year, 100% of content areas will implement district-adopted High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) with demonstrated integrity, resulting in increased alignment to grade-level standards and improved student performance on standards-based assessments as measured by:

- Acquisition of approved curriculum materials that meet HQIM or equivalent evaluation rubrics across all content areas
- Instructional walkthrough and evaluation data
- Student performance data (local and state assessments)

Goal 2:

Professional Learning & Coaching

By the end of the 2031 school year, 85% of educators will report increased confidence and skill in delivering grade-level instruction by participating in ongoing, job-embedded professional learning as measured by:

- Focus groups
- District created surveys
- Student performance data (local and state assessments)
- Instructional walkthrough and evaluation data

Goal 3:

Family & Community Partnerships

By the end of the 2031 school year, increase by 10% both the number of structured opportunities promoting curriculum and literacy expectations and the percentage of families reporting understanding of grade-level expectations as measured by:

- Focus groups
- District created surveys
- Communication frequency
- Participation data



cake	bee	bike
plane	cheese	globe
rake	sheep	music
vase	zebra	tube
	lion	goat
	pie	home
		mule

Vowel Teams

ee

two vowels go walking
first one does the talking!

af

sheep

The second vowel stays quiet!

Vowel Teams

igh ie

When two vowels go walking
The first one does the talking!

night

pie

The first vowel says its name!

The second vowel stays quiet!

The first vowel says its name!

ui

Vo

Te

When two vowels go walking
The first one does the talking!





Wellness

PRIORITY STATEMENT:

WE will build a culture where students and adults feel healthy, supported, connected, and safe - physically, socially, and emotionally - to enable engaged learning and success. Wellness will include proactive and responsive supports and services within schools and the broader community.

EQUITY STATEMENT:

Wellness creates environments where every student and adult feels a true sense of belonging naturally fosters higher engagement, stronger attendance, improved academic performance and increased staff retention.



FOCUS AREA 1:

WE will empower students with social-emotional and behavioral competence.

Goal:

Social-Emotional Learning

By the end of the 2031 school year, 100% of Colonial schools will implement a comprehensive Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) framework. As a result, 80% of students will demonstrate proficiency in core social-emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making) and there will be a 10% reduction in student behavior referrals as compared to data from the 2025-2026 school year as measured by:

- A social-emotional competency assessment
- Behavioral referral data

FOCUS AREA 2:

WE will cultivate staff well-being and professional sustainability.

Goal:

Staff support and well-being

By the end of the 2031 school year, the district will have invested in employee wellness supports that will result in at least a 15% increase in positive responses related to workload manageability and a 10% reduction in reported burnout as measured by district created surveys.

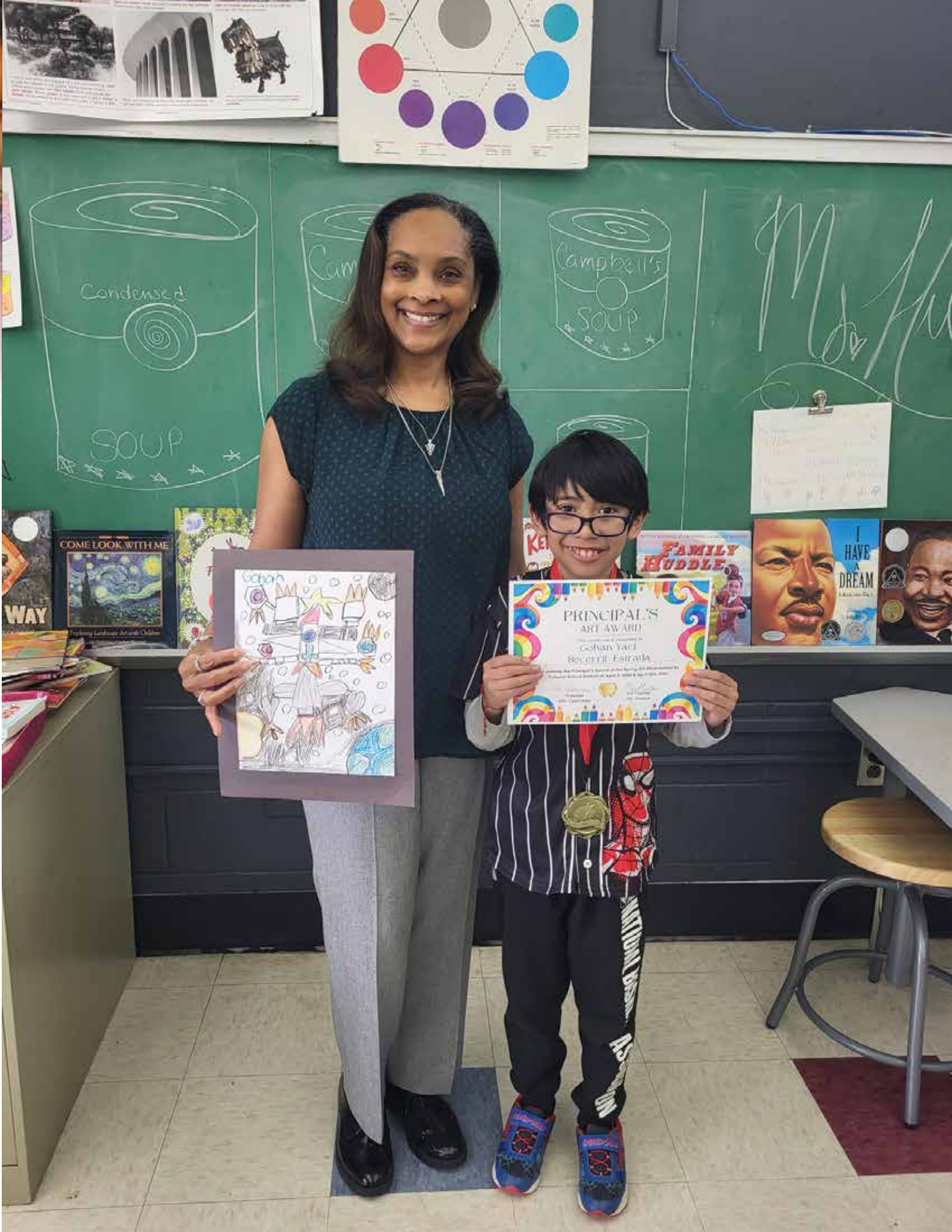
FOCUS AREA 3:

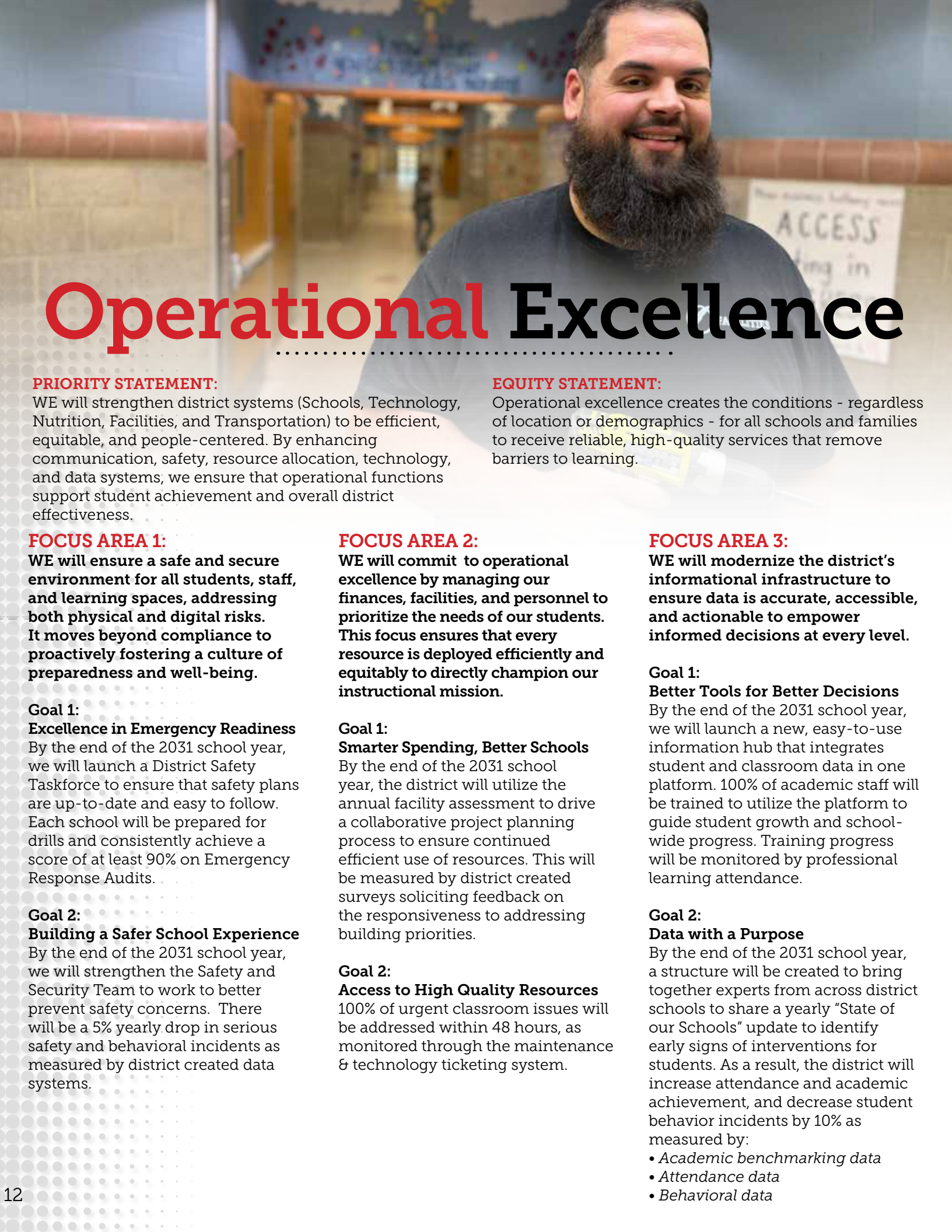
WE will engage families as partners in supporting student well-being.

Goal:

Families as partners in student well-being

By the end of the 2031 school year, each school will embed well-being (e.g., social-emotional learning, mental health information, student support resources, community partners) into at least two family-focused school events. As a result, at least 70% of the families will communicate positive feedback related to usefulness and accessibility as measured by district created surveys.



A smiling man with a beard and a dark t-shirt stands in a school hallway. The hallway has blue walls, orange pipes, and a sign that says 'ACCESS'. The title 'Operational Excellence' is overlaid on the image.

Operational Excellence

PRIORITY STATEMENT:

WE will strengthen district systems (Schools, Technology, Nutrition, Facilities, and Transportation) to be efficient, equitable, and people-centered. By enhancing communication, safety, resource allocation, technology, and data systems, we ensure that operational functions support student achievement and overall district effectiveness.

EQUITY STATEMENT:

Operational excellence creates the conditions - regardless of location or demographics - for all schools and families to receive reliable, high-quality services that remove barriers to learning.

FOCUS AREA 1:

WE will ensure a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and learning spaces, addressing both physical and digital risks. It moves beyond compliance to proactively fostering a culture of preparedness and well-being.

Goal 1:

Excellence in Emergency Readiness

By the end of the 2031 school year, we will launch a District Safety Taskforce to ensure that safety plans are up-to-date and easy to follow. Each school will be prepared for drills and consistently achieve a score of at least 90% on Emergency Response Audits.

Goal 2:

Building a Safer School Experience

By the end of the 2031 school year, we will strengthen the Safety and Security Team to work to better prevent safety concerns. There will be a 5% yearly drop in serious safety and behavioral incidents as measured by district created data systems.

FOCUS AREA 2:

WE will commit to operational excellence by managing our finances, facilities, and personnel to prioritize the needs of our students. This focus ensures that every resource is deployed efficiently and equitably to directly champion our instructional mission.

Goal 1:

Smarter Spending, Better Schools

By the end of the 2031 school year, the district will utilize the annual facility assessment to drive a collaborative project planning process to ensure continued efficient use of resources. This will be measured by district created surveys soliciting feedback on the responsiveness to addressing building priorities.

Goal 2:

Access to High Quality Resources

100% of urgent classroom issues will be addressed within 48 hours, as monitored through the maintenance & technology ticketing system.

FOCUS AREA 3:

WE will modernize the district's informational infrastructure to ensure data is accurate, accessible, and actionable to empower informed decisions at every level.

Goal 1:

Better Tools for Better Decisions

By the end of the 2031 school year, we will launch a new, easy-to-use information hub that integrates student and classroom data in one platform. 100% of academic staff will be trained to utilize the platform to guide student growth and school-wide progress. Training progress will be monitored by professional learning attendance.

Goal 2:

Data with a Purpose

By the end of the 2031 school year, a structure will be created to bring together experts from across district schools to share a yearly "State of our Schools" update to identify early signs of interventions for students. As a result, the district will increase attendance and academic achievement, and decrease student behavior incidents by 10% as measured by:

- Academic benchmarking data
- Attendance data
- Behavioral data



Profile of a Graduate

BOLD

- Sets goals and pursues them with confidence and determination
- Takes initiative and embraces challenges and change
- Thinks critically and solves real-world problems
- Communicates clearly and effectively in written, verbal, and digital formats
- Adapts to new environments, expectations, and technologies
- Demonstrates professionalism, responsibility, and strong work habits

AUTHENTIC

- Understands personal strengths, interests, and values
- Acts with integrity, accountability, and ethical decision-making
- Reflects on experiences to improve learning and performance
- Manages time, responsibilities, and priorities effectively
- Practices resilience, perseverance, and self-care
- Engages in lifelong learning and personal growth

INCLUSIVE

- Respects and values diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives
- Collaborates effectively with others across differences
- Demonstrates empathy, active listening, and social awareness
- Contributes positively to school, workplace, and community
- Uses digital tools responsibly and ethically
- Builds healthy relationships and works well in teams

College and



Career Ready



318 East Basin Road
New Castle, DE 19720
(302) 323-2700



Scan the QR Code above or
visit www.colonialschooldistrict.org
to learn more about the Colonial School District Strategic Plan



fb.com/colonialschooldistrict



@colonialschooldistrict