The Five Strategic Pillars Supporting Our Work

- **PILLAR 1 - Our Mission**: The Dobbs Ferry School District strives to develop independent, curious, and open-minded learners who think critically, work collaboratively, act ethically, and are knowledgeable about the world around them.
- **PILLAR 2 - Our Vision**: Independent Thinkers Prepared to Change the World.
- **PILLAR 3 - Our Core Values**: These support this vision and guide the board's decisions and the work of the district:
    - Providing a high-quality and challenging curriculum with the depth, breadth, and relevance appropriate to each learner;
    - Respecting the unique abilities of each student;
    - Using the most effective and evidence-based instructional approaches and technological advances;
    - Encouraging students to meet their challenges – whether academic, athletic, or artistic – with openness, enthusiasm, and a willingness to take risks;
    - Recruiting, retaining, and developing high-quality teachers and staff; and
    - Celebrating and learning from the diversity of our students and the greater Dobbs Ferry community.
- **PILLAR 4 - Our Foundational Principles and Strategic Points of Focus**

    Principle 1: Welcoming and Affirming Environment

    - ***Strategic Focus Point 1: Positive School Climate and Culture***: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by developing a welcoming school environment that is reflective of the diversity present in the larger community where all students feel included in what they encounter at school, including in their classroom resources, in differing historical perspectives that they learn about, in equitable opportunities for engagement, advancement and achievement, and the adults they interact with each day; by providing explicit instruction and structured interventions in social-emotional learning and executive functions that have a sound basis in

educational research; by aligning our work with the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile; and by developing/enhancing our staff's abilities to identify, understand, and improve positive student behavior.

- ***Strategic Focus Point 2: Recruitment, Retention, and Development of Personnel***: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by investing in promising culturally relevant practices for employee recruitment; by intentionally recruiting well-qualified staff that reflects our student demographics; and by providing ongoing, targeted professional learning opportunities and proven methods of evaluation and feedback.
- ***Strategic Focus Point 3: Family and Community Communications and Engagement***: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by engaging in proactive, regular, and meaningful two-way communication with parents and families, and by inviting parents, families, and the community to participate in important activities and events.

Principle 2: High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction

- ***Strategic Focus Point 1: Instruction***: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by developing/enhancing our instructional staff's teaching abilities through an understanding of how students learn, research-informed instructional techniques and frameworks, including the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model, and effective feedback models from peers and supervisors.
- ***Strategic Focus Point 2: Technology:*** We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by researching evidence-based technology tools and platforms *(including the use of artificial intelligence)* that have been shown to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our instruction and *support overall student success.*

Principle 3: Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment

- ***Strategic Focus Point 1: Curriculum Development and Implementation***: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by creating, adapting, and/or adopting rigorous Tier 1 curriculum that aligns with the NYS Learning Standards and the International Baccalaureate framework and Profile of a Learner; contains diverse perspectives and experiences; reflects the latest research evidence, and develops/enhances students' grade-level abilities in reading, writing, listening and speaking, mathematical understandings, and, as a result, their ability to think critically.

- ***Strategic Focus Point 2: Assessments***: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by developing and enhancing clear understandings of the design and purpose(s) of effective assessments and how they can be utilized to improve instruction, by carefully selecting those assessments that we will use to measure student learning, and by supporting the data literacy of faculty and administration.

Principle 4: Ongoing Professional Learning

- ***Strategic Focus Point 1: Targeted Professional Learning that Supports Evidence-based/Informed strategies across all areas of operation:*** We will maintain a focus on professional learning opportunities that are grounded in effectiveness research, supportive of the district's initiatives, and that continue to build the knowledge base of educators so that they can provide sound instruction to and support for our students.

PILLAR 5 - Our Theory of Action:

1. *IF* the primary purpose for schooling is to teach children **how to learn** across a variety of targeted domains, *THEN* we must make this purpose an explicit area of focus in the recruitment and training of our faculty and staff. *THIS WILL RESULT IN* an increasing number of employees who will base their teaching on the principles of the science of learning, and an improvement in outcomes for all students.
2. *IF the **process of learning** is based on consistent principles from cognitive science (the science of learning) related to working and long-term memory, THEN we must ensure that students, faculty, staff, and families have a deep understanding of these principles. THIS WILL RESULT IN a deeper educator understanding of effective instructional practices and improved outcomes for all students*.
3. *IF* the **effectiveness and longevity of learning** rely heavily upon evidence-based instructional and assessment practices, *THEN* we must know and understand these practices and establish habits of staying attuned to new evidence. *THIS WILL RESULT IN* more effective, efficient, and consistent instructional practices, and improved outcomes for all students.
4. *IF* the time that we have to provide instruction that will cause students to learn so as to meet and exceed grade-level standards is limited, *THEN* as educators and educational leaders we must act with urgency to find those **methods and assessments that work better** in less time based on consistent evidence. *THIS WILL RESULT IN* deeper educator understanding of effective and efficient

instructional practices, improved outcomes for all students, and greater educator satisfaction.

5. *IF* our students require **an ever-increasing amount of content knowledge** to further their learning, THEN we must be intentional in choosing the best-known learning opportunities and experiences that systematically build knowledge and the associated skills and dispositions that our students need to succeed. THIS WILL RESULT IN more effective and efficient instructional practices, greater enjoyment for student learners, and improved outcomes for all students.
6. *IF* there are known instructional practices and beliefs that do not have a supporting body of evidence, but are nonetheless being used by our instructional staff, *THEN* we must discontinue these practices and replace them with practices that do have **a supporting body of evidence of improving teaching and learning**. *THIS WILL RESULT IN* fewer obstacles to learning, more effective and efficient instructional strategies, improved outcomes for all students, and greater enjoyment of the teaching and learning process by students and staff.
7. *IF*, through our instructional practices in the delivery of curriculum, we expect to <u>increase</u> each of our students' ability to learn and achieve high-level outcomes in their academic, behavioral, and social lives so that they are more fully prepared to be excellent citizens, *THEN* **our work must increasingly be intentional, explicit, and systematic**.