“We are making our schools great.
Join us.”

OVERVIEW

This plan is a description of the School District of Philadelphia’s current and planned priority work. Its primary objective is to align the work of all employees to the Goals, Strategies, and Actions described here. It is also intended to communicate a comprehensive overview of the District’s plan to parents, families, students, partners and stakeholders. Building off v1.0, and developed after an additional year of work and reflection, review, and research, it is a “living document” subject to change as new facts are gathered and new evidence comes to light.

Feedback on this Action Plan and new ideas should be provided to: actionplan@philasd.org

This Action Plan can be accessed online at: www.philasd.org/actionplan
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Executive Summary: Goals, Strategies and Actions in Brief

### Specific Actions

**STRATEGY 1: IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING**

A. Fully adopt and integrate the PA Core standards in all of our teaching and learning activities
B. Define college and career readiness based on student mastery of content, and align graduation standards
C. Identify and implement a rigorous, flexible PreK-12 curriculum
D. Implement a literacy-rich early childhood continuum of services, including recuperative practices
E. Develop and implement a coherent assessment system
F. Promote effective instructional practices in every classroom
G. Accelerate progress towards personalized learning
H. Provide high quality Special Education services in the least restrictive learning environment
I. Support rigorous and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for English Language Learners (ELLs)
J. Integrate a focus on “academic tenacity” throughout the curriculum
K. Improve student nutrition and meal experience
STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF EXCELLENT SCHOOLS

A. Make all District schools great by implementing high performing school practices
B. Provide students with an environment conducive to learning by implementing and maintaining safety and climate plans that incorporate evidence-based programs
C. Ensure all schools are porous – connected to community resources and partnerships to meet student needs
D. Empower school leaders and their leadership teams with the authority to make important decisions
E. Make poor performing schools better through the Renaissance turnaround program, including evidence-based revisions to the Promise Academy model
F. Promote compelling, successful programs including Career and Technical Education and project-based learning
G. Review and improve the provision of schooling across all our alternative settings
H. Strengthen neighborhood schools
I. Create and launch new, evidence-based school models, and scale the ones that work
J. Be a great charter school authorizer to ensure all charters are good school options, and promote the sharing of successful practices across all schools
K. Develop and implement a school progress measure
L. Provide a clean and comfortable building environment in all schools
M. Continuously update and refine the system-of-schools plan, including school expansions and closure assessments of chronically under-enrolled and under-performing schools

STRATEGY 3: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP EXCEPTIONAL, COMMITTED PEOPLE

A. Improve recruitment and hiring practices to attract the highest quality candidates
B. Strengthen the principal and teacher pipelines
C. Celebrate, retain and promote high performing staff, particularly great teachers and principals
D. Support the continuous development of all personnel – tailored to individuals – including an emphasis on school-based coaching for principals and teachers
E. Create meaningful opportunities for teacher collaboration and for principal collaboration
F. Collaborate with city and other partners to make Philadelphia a premier place for principals and teachers to work
G. Set clear expectations for teachers, principals and support staff and implement regular performance evaluations
H. Engage teachers, principals, professional networks, labor unions and other partners to identify, explore, develop, and scale great ideas related to talent

STRATEGY 4: BECOME A PARENT- AND FAMILY-CENTERED ORGANIZATION

A. Actively reach out to parents to involve them in their children’s schools, including the launch of a School Advisory Council in every school
B. Establish clear processes for parent and family input and ideas
C. Provide parents with information about their students’ progress and how to support that progress
D. Provide parents and families with excellent customer service
E. Provide parents with ample information on schools, and increase the equity and transparency of the school selection, transfer, and placement processes
STRATEGY 5: BECOME AN INNOVATIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE ORGANIZATION
   A. Cultivate and sustain partnerships at the system and school levels
   B. Transform the organization by instituting strategic management processes at all levels and building a culture of excellence
   C. Improve data accuracy, application, and accessibility
   D. Implement effective, aligned business processes
   E. Improve communication throughout the organization and to the public
   F. Actively promote innovation and cross-functional design thinking
   G. Implement core student- and teacher-facing systems for schools, including a Learning Management System and a Student Information System
   H. Improve the quality and lower the cost of transportation services

STRATEGY 6: ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN FINANCIAL BALANCE
   A. Seek additional revenues
   B. Continuously identify savings opportunities and capture identified cost savings
   C. Meet the immediate financial challenges of FY14 and FY15
   D. Continuously analyze the impact of spending and deploy resources to achieve priorities, including the activities, schools and programs that need them the most
   E. Develop a comprehensive, outcomes-focused budgeting strategy, including five-year planning
   F. Institute financial controls
   G. Align the capital and grants programs in support of the anchor goals
Preface

In working to make all schools great, this much is clear: All means all.

We cannot maintain a school system where too few students are adequately prepared for higher education and the workforce, where too many lack opportunities for academic or professional growth. All of our schools and students need bold expectations, ambitious goals and unapologetic solutions.

The citizens of Philadelphia deserve great schools. Parents deserve great schools for their children. Students deserve high-quality education that prepares them for life. Residents deserve an outstanding next generation of civic, business and social leaders – people committed to the collective effort of building and sustaining a system of exceptional schools for all children.

In introducing Action Plan v2.0, the four goals that anchor our work are both aspirational in scope and urgent in nature. All students must graduate, ready for college and career. All 8-year-olds must be able to read on grade level in preparing for future academic success. All schools must have great principals and teachers at all grade levels. And we must spend all funds wisely. That is the challenge before us, and we need all Philadelphians to join us in achieving these goals.

Action Plan v2.0 is an evolution of our blueprint for making schools great. It explains what we mean by great, our goals and strategies for achieving our targets, and the actions inside our strategies that comprise our core, priority work. It also identifies how we will know our schools are becoming great.

My team and I understand what it will take to make our schools great. In many cases, this will not be a return to past practices or staffing patterns that did not produce better results. Making schools great requires investments in evidenced-based strategies that have worked here and in similar urban settings. These investments will require commitments from our legislators, local leaders, businesses and taxpayers. Our schools are operating this year under circumstances that none of us would wish for; a year-to-year funding mindset cannot continue to be the norm. A stable statewide funding structure that meets students’ needs is paramount in order for The School District of Philadelphia to meet its obligation to all students and families.

As a school district – as a city – we should aspire to have all children exposed to rigorous academics, surrounded by caring adults with high expectations for them. Our goals are solidly intertwined; we cannot graduate 100 percent of students who are both college- and career ready if we do not have 100 percent of 8-year-olds reading on grade level. We cannot invest in making all schools great without 100 percent of the funding needed to educate all children. We cannot have 100 percent of our students meeting our high expectations without 100 percent of our schools having great principals and teachers. And we cannot enhance our workforce and regional economy without 100 percent of students becoming productive citizens.

This work will ultimately determine the future of our great city and the opportunities for our youngest citizens to access a rich, rigorous, high-quality education. Every child can learn. Every school can be great. All of us can help. That is our foundation moving forward. We ask you and all Philadelphians to join us.

Superintendent William Hite
February 2014
Introduction: We Are Making Our Schools Great. Join Us.

Every morning throughout the city, students wake up ready to learn. Every day, teachers, principals, and support staff arrive at our schools ready to teach, to lead, and to support student learning. The countless meaningful interactions between students and adults that unfold each day in our schools are the heart of what we do. These are the building blocks of opportunity. This is the way that we, collectively, deliver on the civil right of every child to a quality public education. This is how we develop the next generation of civic and social leaders. This is what it takes to grow the city. And we can do much, much better. We all have a stake in this work – and we all can contribute to its success.

We are making our schools great. Period. And we say to everyone in Philadelphia and beyond: join us.

This Action Plan v2.0 is an evolution of our blueprint for making our schools great. In the pages that follow, we provide the details of what we need to do, our collective work and obligations. We are at a fortunate moment in the history of education in this country; we know what to do, based on the mountains of practice and research and evidence that have been accumulating over decades. Much of our collective challenge is about doing it well. Therefore, many actions here are about excellence of implementation, and about building the strong, elaborate support systems to enable the crucible of our classrooms – the fine points of interaction between our teachers, other educators, and our students – to become places of consistent joy and success.

We are making our schools great. Join us.

Our Vision

The goals, strategies and actions detailed in this plan all promote our profound vision:

The School District of Philadelphia will deliver on the right of every child in Philadelphia to an excellent public school education and ensure all children graduate from high school ready to succeed.

The key word in this vision is “right.” The District exists to deliver on the civil right of every child to a strong, lifelong foundation.

The Values That Drive Our Work

A set of core values undergird this vision, and inform all of our strategies and actions. We believe that:

1) **All students can and will learn** – We care deeply about each student, and we believe that every student has the potential to learn at high levels. We believe the culture, language, and background that each child brings to school are strengths to build upon, and that we have a responsibility to meet each student’s educational needs and goals and provide a safe and engaging environment.

2) **High quality instruction is at the core of our work** – We believe in the persistent pursuit of excellence in teaching and expertise in content. We strive to deliver instruction that reflects high expectations for learning, that inspires students to meet high standards, and that sparks passionate and joyful interest in learning. We believe in the power of teachers and the principals who support them to provide transformative instructional experiences for all children.

3) **Schools are learning organizations** – We believe in cultivating respectful and productive relationships amongst all stakeholders that promote critical reflection, shared accountability, and continuous improvement. We are committed to constantly improving the performance of each person and each system within the organization.
4) **Parents and families are our partners** – Parents and families are the primary custodians of their child’s learning. We believe that our role is to work in partnership with parents and families to provide students with the education they need and deserve.

5) **We are trusted stewards of public resources** – We believe that all District staff are responsible stewards of existing resources whereby all expenditure decisions – no matter how large or small – are aligned with and help to advance the District’s strategic priorities. It is equally important that we operate in manner that ensures fiscal and financial stability.

**What We Have Accomplished: v1.0 to v2.0**

By taking many of the Actions outlined in Action Plan v1.0, published in January 2013, we have managed significant changes to both the structure and operations of the District and achieved much during this past school year. As a result, we have a stronger foundation on which to expand our system of excellent schools and to continue to ensure more students are in great schools.

Throughout this past year, we have increased our focus on teaching and learning by launching the alignment of our curriculum with the Pennsylvania Core Standards and the implementation of these standards within our schools. Toward that end, the District developed and is working with our educators to implement high-performing school practices as well as highly effective instructional practices across all District schools (see Exhibits 3 and 4).

We have also worked to improve school climate and safety. The School District has decreased the number of persistently dangerous schools from six (6) schools in SY 2012-2013 to two (2) schools this current year. Just as importantly, we were able to provide research-based behavioral and intervention programs – Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) – to 26 District schools to improve students’ learning environment.

Our staff, along with our principals and partners worked tirelessly throughout the summer to provide a welcoming environment for our students and their families. More than fifty District schools received new paint jobs, lighting upgrades, tile replacements or other improvements and every school that welcomed our students hosted an open house. Our partners also provided over $3 million of additional funds and services to support school opening.

While 23 schools were closed and two schools relocated, improving the utilization of our schools from 67% to 74%, the District along with our partners continued to concentrate on improving our overall system of schools and providing our students with quality options. The District continued to turnaround our lowest performing schools by investing resources in four (4) new Promise Academies, two (2) new pre-Promise Academies, and three (3) Renaissance charter schools, positively affecting over 5,000 students. We improved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming with the support of the Middleton Family, implemented a career academy model at two high schools, and piloted a proficiency based pathways program in several of our high schools. Furthermore, over $5.9 million was secured to support the expansion or creation of high performing schools in the city for SY13-14; we opened an extension campus for SLA at Beeber, established a new project-based learning school, The Workshop School, and expanded Hill-Freedman, a high performing middle school. Additionally, $3.3 million was secured to support the development of three new, evidence-based high schools for SY14-15.

As this school year saw charter school enrollment increase to over 60,000, we have also seen significant improvements in our charter authorizing function. This year’s charter renewal process is more effective and efficient, and less burdensome on charter schools. We have drafted a comprehensive revision to the SRC’s authorizing policies, including clearer standards and a focus on student outcomes. We have made tough non-renewal recommendations on three low-performing charter schools.

None of this work could be achieved without talented staff. We launched the PhillyPlus+ pilot program for principal training residencies in collaboration with the Great Schools Compact and have sought to provide increased and improved professional opportunities for teachers and principals through the implementation of
evidence-based “high performing schools practices.” We have also worked with higher education partners to implement change management programs for school leaders and administrators. Our teachers and principals have also all been trained on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers are now implementing PA Core aligned instructional practices, and we are planning city-wide teacher conferences to share expertise and develop collaborative solutions to instructional challenges.

Our organization has also begun a profound transformation. We have shifted towards greater transparency and accountability through the launch of our open data initiative, and the revamping of our town halls and leadership meetings. We have improved our operational efficiency and effectiveness by, amongst other things, reducing principal’s approval burden on grant-funded extra-curricular activities as well as starting the process of revising our position control systems. We have continued to support innovation through our support of EduCon and the first-ever District-sponsored hackathon to promote technology solutions for business challenges.

Finally, in our role as responsible financial stewards of public resources, we consistently advocated for additional school funding to ensure our schools could open; this resulted in $112 million of additional revenue for the District in FY 2014. In FY 2012 a series of actions were taken to reduce expenditures by $662 million, consisting of $526 million in recurring cuts and $136 million of non-recurring cuts. However, a structural gap remained for FY 2013; as a result, the District borrowed $300 million in FY 2013 in order to maintain FY 2012 service in levels in schools, while simultaneously generating approximately a $17 million savings. For FY 2014, owing to the loss of approximately $119 million in federal and state grant funds and a projected budget gap of approximately $304 million, the District was forced to cut expenditures and open schools with minimal staffing and a reduced central office; this loss was mitigated by the fact that we identified and are tracking an additional $96 million in savings. We have also implemented a strong system of grant compliance and have begun planning for the implementation of a weighted student funding formula.

The District’s continued development and progress since the release of Action Plan v1.0 in January 2013 merits an update to the Plan. Consistent with v1.0, Action Plan v2.0 is intended to outline the priority work that we will pursue to achieve our Anchor Goals. As with Action Plan v1.0, Action Plan v2.0 is a “living document,” subject to change as progress is made, circumstances change, and additional evidence comes to light.

The Case for Investment

This Action Plan describes what we need to do. We can do some portion of each listed action within our existing resources, but this will not make our schools great. While we feel tremendous urgency to make our schools great, we are constrained by our financial condition. More investment is required, and the case for this investment is clear:

• We have a detailed, evidence-based plan to make all our schools great and to ensure all students have access to a great school.

• For students, increased educational attainment has been consistently linked to increased wages. Earning a high school diploma “increases average lifetime earnings by $200,000, a bachelor’s degree increases such earnings by $600,000.” Furthermore, increased education improves life outcomes and results in higher levels of civic engagement.

• For communities, a well-maintained, quality neighborhood school can help attract and retain residents in an existing neighborhood, generate support for local businesses, and revitalize the community.

• For the local economy, an educated workforce increases productivity and, by extension, regional wealth; successful graduates also reduce the burden on the public of future costs.
To facilitate these positive outcomes, it is imperative that the educational options provided to our students and families are of high quality.

In the near-term an improved education system provides a rationale for our families to continue to select our schools and for our millennial workforce to remain in the region as they raise their own families. According to a recently released study, half of the young adults living in Philadelphia indicated that they “definitely or probably would not be living in Philadelphia five to 10 years from now [.... because of] job and career reasons, school and child-rearing concerns, and crime and public safety.” Of those who indicated they might move from Philadelphia 29% stated school and child-upbringing concerns — the second most cited reason.

A high quality education system can help draw new families and jobs to the region; contributing to a virtuous cycle of economic development. In the long-term, an improved education system will mean more of our students graduate ready for college and career, thereby contributing to and benefitting from this economic growth. The imperative is clear: we must work to improve our schools to ensure that Philadelphia is a city of opportunity for all our children.

Part I: Anchor Goals

Anchor Goal 1: 100% of students will graduate, ready for college and career.

We believe that all students can succeed academically. This is demonstrated by the fact that the District is home to some of the best schools in the city and state. It is our collective responsibility to work relentlessly to improve academic outcomes and opportunities for our students who are progressing through our system. The truth is that while we have graduated more students over time and our college matriculation rate has also risen, we are still far below the national average for graduation and college matriculation rates. Our 4-year cohort graduation rate of 64% is 14 percentage points lower than the national average of 78%.

More than ever, our students’ graduation and future success depends on their ability to demonstrate mastery of high standards at all levels. Specifically, our entering 9th grade class is now required to score at proficient on the state’s Algebra I, Literature and Biology exams in order to graduate. Based on the most recent performance results, only 39.8% of our 11th graders scored proficient or advanced in Algebra I, 20.3% scored proficient or advanced in Biology; and 53.4% scored proficient or advanced in Literature.
Anchor Goal 2: 100% of 8-year-olds will read on grade level.

The foundation of all student learning begins in early childhood and is built on the ability to read on grade level. Research has shown that students’ third grade reading levels are highly predictive of their 8th and 9th grade reading performance, high school graduation and college attendance. However, in 2012-2013, only 45% of District students scored proficient or advanced on the PSSA-Reading assessment, the lowest it has been since 2005-2006. Recognizing this fact, and the importance of 3rd grade literacy in students’ future success, it is imperative that we work to improve early literacy performance across the District.

Anchor Goal 3: 100% of schools will have great principals and teachers.

Teachers and principals have a tremendous impact on student learning. In a longitudinal study of student performance in Tennessee (see chart), students who were placed with high-performing teachers for three consecutive years performed 52 to 54 percentile rank higher than students who were placed with low-performing teachers for three consecutive years. Therefore, in order to provide students with a school climate and culture, and dynamic, excellent classroom experiences which facilitate and advance learning, we are committed to ensuring that all of our schools have great principals and teachers.

Anchor Goal 4: SDP will have 100% of the funding we need for great schools, and zero deficit.

We are currently faced with significant financial challenges. Although we have made significant cuts to our operating costs, non-discretionary costs including pensions, benefits and debt-service continue to increase and impose enormous financial responsibilities.

As detailed above, additional resources are needed to provide our students with a high quality education. The District will work tirelessly to seek additional resources for our students and schools, and to ensure these resources are deployed in a manner that will help yield the best student outcomes.

Simultaneously, we must continue to be good stewards of public resources and maintain financial stability in order to better serve our students’ academic, social and emotional needs. Through sound fiscal management, we will be able to provide our students and staff with a stable learning and working environment while ensuring the financial sustainability of the District.
How We Will Track Our Progress and How We Will Hold Ourselves Accountable

**Anchor Goal 1: 100% of students with graduate college and career-ready**
- The percentage of students who score advanced on the PSSA exams
- The percentage of students who score proficient or advanced on the PSSA exams
- Keystone exam pass rate (first time and repeat)
- The percentage of students who score advanced on the Keystone exams
- The percentage of students reading below grade level who demonstrate improvement
- Growth (AGI) on PSSA exams
- Growth (AGI) on Keystone exams
- On-Track Metric - % of First-Time 9th-, 10th, and 11th-Graders who Earned the Minimum Number Credits Required for Promotion
- Back-on-Track Metric - % of Under-Credited Students who Earned the Minimum Number of Credits Required (or More) for Promotion
- AP - % 12th Graders Ever Scored 3 or Higher (on at least one exam)
- SAT/ACT - % 12th Graders Ever Scored 1550 on SAT/22 on ACT
- NOCTI/NIMS - % Competent or Advanced
- 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate (New Local)
- First-Fall College Matriculation Rate
- % of Students Attending 95% or More of Instructional Days
- Student Retention Rate
- % of Students with Zero Out-of-School Suspensions
- Teacher Attendance Rate
- ELL – ACCESS performance and growth
- ELL – exit / re-entry

**Anchor Goal 2: 100% of 8 year-olds will read on grade level**
- The percentage of students in grades kindergarten through 3rd grade reading on grade level
- The percentage of students in 3rd grade scoring proficient or advanced on the PSSA-Reading Assessment

**Anchor Goal 3: 100% of schools will have great principals and teachers**
- The percentage of schools with principals who have improved school climate and student growth
- The percentage of schools where the principal is identified as “proficient” or “distinguished”
- The percentage of schools where the majority of teachers are identified as “proficient” or “distinguished”

**Anchor Goal 4: SDP will have 100% of funding we need for great schools, and zero deficit**
- (Revenues – Expenditures Required for Great Schools) > 0
- % increase in revenues

The Actions that follow have been proven to help promote and improve student achievement; it is our job to take these Actions and implement them with fidelity.
Part II: Strategies and Actions

KEY DEFINITIONS:

STRATEGY: Represents a District priority around which District work is organized that directly contributes to the achievement of our Anchor goals.

ACTION: Represents a specific and measurable body of work that directly and significantly contributes to the achievement of a Strategy.

The Strategies and Actions that follow are connected. The decision to place any particular Action under any specific Strategy is an attempt to provide order and clarity to the work; it is by no means an indication that a particular Action does not influence or advance another Strategy.

Strategy 1: Improve Student Learning

Providing our students with opportunities and choices upon graduation requires that we improve the content we deliver and empower our teachers with the tools necessary to furnish our students with the best quality instruction. Through this Strategy, we will implement Actions that will clarify our expectations for teaching and learning and provide the tools our educators need to differentiate their high quality instruction.

A. Fully adopt and integrate the PA Core Standards in all of our teaching and learning activities. The PA Core Standards are a consistent set of standards developed in reference to best educational practices from across the globe aimed at ensuring students are prepared to succeed in their college and career goals. The PA State Board of Education adopted the Common Core standards in 2010 and subsequently tailored them to meet the specific needs of students in Pennsylvania, creating the PA Core Standards. These new standards will require PA Core aligned assessments for graduation starting with the class of 2016-2017. We are working to ensure our students have the instruction and opportunities to master the new rigorous academic content and will modify the curriculum to match the focus on literacy and increased reading time.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards in 2010, an important step towards ensuring that our students graduate with the knowledge and skills critical for success. The state has released new Keystone assessments and changed its graduation requirements to reflect these new standards. Research suggests that District proficiency rates could decline by as much as 36 percentage points during the shift to assessment under these higher standards.

“The shift to Common Core Standards was a good step to take. We all need to understand how to be ‘results oriented’ regarding academics and curriculum.”

- Elementary School Principal

B. Define college and career readiness based on student mastery of content, and align graduation standards. Preparing students for college and career begins the moment our students enter our schools. By providing our students with high quality programs, instruction, and learning experiences, as well as with diverse opportunities to demonstrate content mastery, District students will have multiple means by which they can reach their college and career aspirations.

Students who read on grade level by third grade, graduate within four years, score a 3 or better on an AP exam, score a 1550 on the SAT, and matriculate within one year of high school graduation are more likely
C. **Identify and implement a rigorous, flexible PreK-12 curriculum.** The District will work to implement a PA Core aligned curriculum which is coherent enough to provide principals and teachers with much-sought guidance, yet flexible enough to facilitate individual school missions and approaches. A rigorous, flexible curriculum will foster opportunities for personalized instruction while ensuring that students have the opportunity to achieve and exceed state standards.

> Coherent, comprehensive curricula aligned with clear standards have been shown to be critical components of systemic, sustained improvements in student outcomes.  

D. **Implement a literacy-rich early childhood continuum, including recuperative practices.** We will equip our young learners with the cognitive, social and emotional skills they need to start and stay on track in school by implementing a comprehensive literacy framework, working with our partners to increase the number of high quality pre-K seats across the city, strengthening our students and families’ kindergarten transition experience, and bolstering literacy in kindergarten through 3rd grade. We will do all of this as an active collaborator with Philadelphia’s campaign for grade-level reading.

> High-quality early education programs are critical for the success of children. Research demonstrates that children who take part in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs become better, higher performing students. Such success translates into higher graduate rates, better jobs, more fiscally responsible citizens, less dependency on social supports or involvement with law enforcement and a significant improvement of their state’s economy. However, based on performance on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), only 53% of District kindergarten students were reading on grade level at the end of the 2012-2013 school year and by the end of 3rd grade, approximately 45% of District students are scoring proficient or advanced on the state’s PSSA Reading assessment.

> “Begin to stress literacy and writing from elementary school onward so that by the time students arrive in high school they will have a working vocabulary to discuss literature and the ability to write on a proficient level.”

- High School Teacher

E. **Develop and implement a coherent assessment system.** To ensure that students are learning throughout the year and that teachers and parents have the information necessary to support student learning, the District will implement a comprehensive assessment system that helps educators monitor student progress against PA Core aligned standards, informs instructional practices, and assists in the identification of student interventions. To advance our early literacy goal, the District will prioritize common assessments and universal screeners for early learners.

> A coherent assessment system – one which uses a combination of formative and summative assessments – makes it possible for educators to track and advance student learning throughout the year as well as determine whether students have learned the necessary content by the end of the year. High performing systems have used individual student data to identify strengths and weaknesses in instruction, establish a sense of shared accountability and focus on results.

F. **Promote effective instructional practices in every classroom.** Quality instruction is core to student success; therefore, we will provide professional development opportunities and support teachers in the implementation of highly effectively instructional practices (see Exhibit 4), a researched-based set of effective
English Language Arts, technical subject and math practices aligned to PA Core instruction. In addition, we will continue to promote the District’s Backward By Design instructional framework, an outcomes-focused instructional model aimed at ensuring effective delivery of the PA Core Standards and enhanced by the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) process.

Student achievement is highly correlated to the quality of instruction students receive; it is critical that we define quality instruction and support our teachers in its delivery.\textsuperscript{15}

G. \textbf{Accelerate progress towards personalized learning.} Our students have different backgrounds, experiences, skills, interests, and learning styles. We can best support our diverse student population by implementing a variety of instructional strategies and offering learning opportunities that keep our students engaged.\textsuperscript{16} Personalization involves both the creation of deep relationships so students are well known to adults, as well as the customization of how content is delivered to better support a more diverse array of learners. Promising strategies and opportunities include competency-based and individualized learning pathways, project-based experiences, and opportunities for self-paced acceleration and recuperation that include online learning, anywhere/anytime learning, and internships as well as other real world learning experiences. To help facilitate this work, our educators, families and students will work collaboratively to develop personalized learning plans to guide our students learning. We will also provide educators and administrators with disaggregated data to inform instructional and intervention practices, helping to promote personalized educational experiences for our students.\textsuperscript{17} The District will develop and promote these practices, and identify and invest in technology tools and systems that will give students and educators the ability to personalize pathways and pace with opportunities for accelerating and recuperating learning and access to "just in time" feedback and instructional content. By deeply personalizing the learning experience for its students the District will support all students to master rigorous standards.

\textit{Personalized, or competency-based, learning allows students to progress as they demonstrate content mastery. Such instructional approaches to personalizing learning are relatively new, but hold great promise.} \textsuperscript{18} Schools that are advancing models of personalized learning are achieving impressive results. For example, Summit Schools in California are highly personalized, rigorous and focused on helping students to direct their own learning. Summit graduates are on track to graduate college in six years at double the national average.\textsuperscript{19} Similarly, The New Tech Network, a nonprofit organization that transforms schools into innovative learning through a more personalized, blended-learning and project based approach, is showing promising results – 74% of New Tech students enroll in 2 or 4 year colleges.\textsuperscript{20}

H. \textbf{Provide high quality Special Education services in the least restrictive learning environment.} The needs of our students with disabilities are diverse; accordingly, we will align our organization, systems, policies, and investments to provide excellent instruction and effectively meet their unique needs.\textsuperscript{11} Among other activities, we will review and utilize our students’ data during IEP meetings to inform the programs and services we provide; train and share practices and instructional strategies that have proven effective in improving the outcomes for our students with disabilities with our administrators, teachers and staff; and work with schools and staff to ensure that students with disabilities are being educated in the least restrictive environment.

Most recent District data indicate that only 16\% of District students who have an IEP scored proficient or advanced on the PSSA in Reading and only 18\% scored proficient or advanced on the PSSA in Mathematics. To offer a national comparison, in Maryland, 28\% of 4\textsuperscript{th} grade students with an IEP scored proficient or advanced on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessment, considered a “harder” assessment than PSSAs. Similarly, in Massachusetts, 21\% of 4\textsuperscript{th} grade students with an IEP scored proficient or advanced on the NAEP Math Assessment.\textsuperscript{22}
I. **Support rigorous and linguistically appropriate learning experiences for English Language Learners (ELLs).**

With appropriate capacity and fidelity of implementation, English Language Learner programs improve the outcomes of the students they serve. The District will work to improve and expand bilingual programs and New Learning Academies to serve additional students and will track ELL students’ progress to ensure they are succeeding and have received sufficient support.

*In 2012-2013, only 14% of English Language Learner students scored proficient or advanced on the PSSA in Reading and 27% scored proficient or advanced on the PSSA in Mathematics. To offer a national comparison, in Ohio 18% of 4th grade ELL students scored proficient or advanced the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Assessment, considered a “harder” assessment than PSSAs. Similarly, in Indiana and Ohio, 30% of 4th grade ELL students scored proficient or advanced on the NAEP Math Assessment.*

J. **Integrate a focus on “academic tenacity” throughout the curriculum.** We will actively cultivate students’ academic tenacity by integrating the language and skills of resilience, perseverance, self-control, and problem-solving into schools’ curriculum and culture.

*Students can be taught techniques to strengthen their academic tenacity, defined as the “mindsets and skills that allow students to look beyond short-term concerns to longer-term or higher-order goals and to withstand challenges and setbacks to persevere toward these goals”. These “non-cognitive” skills are more reliable than traditional academic indicators in predicting whether students will graduate, their final Grade Point Average, and their income levels, savings behavior, and mental and physical health as adults.*

K. **Improve student nutrition and meal experience.** We will continually improve student nutrition, student participation in meals, and customer satisfaction by transitioning schools, where possible, to full-service meals and actively engaging students in making healthy dietary decisions. In addition, we will utilize the 2014 satellite meal RFP to improve nutritional value and options, move to the USDA Community Eligibility Option, and work to retain our student meal “best practices” designation from the USDA and PDE. We have promising evidence of declining obesity rates among Philadelphia students, and we will continue to actively invest in our students’ health through high quality school meals.

*Improved nutrition and participation in meals – especially breakfast – have been associated with increased academic performance, improved attendance, and decreased tardiness among school-age children.*
Strategy 2: Develop a System of Excellent Schools

Regardless of whether our schools are being managed by District staff, charter operators, or contractors we are committed to providing high quality options for all Philadelphia students. As this Action Plan makes clear, while we aspire to being a great charter school authorizer and contract-school manager, the vast majority of our efforts are focused on making District-managed schools great. The District has four levers to help ensure that Philadelphia students have high quality school options: (1) transforming poor performing schools; (2) expanding existing good schools; (3) creating new good schools; and (4) closing poor performing schools.

The Actions that follow reflect the fact that no single lever offers a “solution.” Rather, we must engage all levers as parts of a necessary system of change.

A. Make all District schools great by implementing high performing school practices (see Exhibit 3). Based on extensive research regarding high performing school practices, the District has defined the expectations for all schools, and therefore, for school leadership. By promoting these practices, incorporating them into principal development, and holding all school leaders accountable for the implementation of these practices, the District will create the best possible in-school conditions for student success.

Schools that have strong essential supports analogous to many of the District’s high performing school practices were up to ten times more likely to improve students’ reading and mathematics learning than those where one or more of these indicators were weak. Moreover, a low score on even just one indicator can reduce the likelihood of improvement to less than ten percent. 31

B. Provide students with an environment conducive to learning by implementing and maintaining age-appropriate, school-wide safety and climate plans that incorporate evidence-based programs. It is imperative that we improve school safety and climate as they are essential elements of an environment that is conducive to learning. 32 The District will implement evidence-based school-wide climate and culture
programs and train school administrators on the creation of safe and constructive climates; provide professional development and support regarding our attendance, truancy, and disciplinary policies and practices; and implement Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI) strategies that address students’ behavioral needs. The District will prioritize the identification of age-appropriate behavioral health and disciplinary alternatives for young students.

Safety and climate have been linked to improved student achievement; reduced vandalism, absenteeism and disciplinary incidents; and higher teacher retention and satisfaction. However, in the 2012-2013 school year, there were over 9,500 serious incidents in District schools and more than 17,000 students received at least one in-school or out-of school suspension. This meant that 58 of our schools had 10 or more serious incidents per 100 students and 12% of District students were suspended at least once during the school year. Just as importantly, only 8 out of 52 high schools had 50% or more of their students attending 95% or more enrolled days.

“Safety is one of my most important concerns. Students need to know that their school is a safe, welcoming learning community. Bullying awareness, prevention should be emphasized.”

- Elementary School Teacher

C. Ensure all schools are porous – connected to community resources and partnerships to meet student needs. Philadelphia schools are surrounded by a rich array of resources that support the development and learning of students. These resources are currently under-utilized. District and school leadership need to ensure that all schools are “porous” – meaning open to partnerships that aid and support students to thrive – and that such resources are best aligned with the needs of students.

In a review of effective high school design principles, establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with organizations that enrich student learning is one of the 10 core principles found in high-performing secondary schools.

D. Empower school leaders and their leadership teams with the authority to make important decisions. Based on the practices of high performing schools globally, we know that student performance can be improved when principals have autonomy over academic content, personnel and budgets. Accordingly, we will clarify and communicate a consistent set of autonomies, decision-making processes and expectations to help our principals manage their schools. We will also ensure that our schools receive appropriate and differentiated support, guidance and oversight.

Research suggests that nearly 25 percent of the variation in a school’s achievement can be attributed to a principal because he/she is in a unique position to bring together the multiple in-school factors that are necessary to significantly improve student achievement on a large scale. This fact, in combination with a study by OECD which suggests that “in countries where schools have greater autonomy over what is taught and how students are assessed, students tend to perform better,” makes it clear that principal autonomy is critical to student success.

E. Make poor performing schools better through the Renaissance turnaround program, including evidence-based revisions to the Promise Academy model. Through the Renaissance Schools Initiative and other proven interventions, we will turn around our lowest-performing schools that have failed to make and sustain significant improvements in student academic performance, attendance, and school climate. It is imperative that the District utilize evidence-based models and strategies associated with aggressive turnarounds.

Initial reviews of the Renaissance Initiative indicate that K-8 schools were making statistically significant gains (or mitigating declines) over comparison schools in both reading and math during the first two years.
of the program. In projecting whether schools participating in the program are on track for dramatic improvements over a 5-6 year window, Renaissance charter schools operated by Mastery Charter are on track for dramatic improvements in both reading and math while the results for other Renaissance charters indicate that they may fall short. Mastery, Aspira, Young Scholars and Universal have successfully turned around former District schools. In particular, four Mastery schools and one Aspira school are projected to have reading and math proficiency scores that exceed 60% by 2015-2016. Promise Academies, on the other hand, while exhibiting promising early results, are not currently on track to achieve similarly significant gains over a 5-6 year window; however, this may be a result of poor implementation fidelity. 

F. Promote compelling, successful programs including Career and Technical Education and project based learning. The District will increase the numbers of students that are enrolled in and have access to relevant high-quality programs that support student learning by promoting existing programs that still have capacity and expanding programs that have proven successful.

Students who participated in project-based learning classes tended to perform better on assessments of content knowledge, had high levels of engagement, and benefitted from improved critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills.

In 2012-13, the graduation rate for students in comprehensive CTE high schools was 89.2%, which is higher than the District’s average graduation rate of 64%. In partnership with the business community, continued investment in CTE programs that reflect Philadelphia’s high-priority, growing occupations supports the Mayor’s initiatives in these areas and will improve academic outcomes for participating students.

G. Review and improve the provision of schooling across all our alternative settings. The District will work to improve and monitor the quality of non-traditional programming currently being provided to Philadelphia’s students, including students in alternative education students, foster students placed by external agencies, and students placed in outside educational institutions.

Nearly 10,000 Philadelphia students either participate in alternative education programs or attend outside education institutions at a cost of approximately $129 million annually. For students in our accelerated program, across every 9th grade cohort from 2003 to 2006, “accelerated high school students had significantly higher five- and six-year graduation rates than similar students enrolled in neighborhood high schools;” however, the majority of our accelerated students graduate below high school reading and numeracy levels, only 27% go on to postsecondary education, and only 11% persist.

H. Strengthen neighborhood schools. Nearly 90% of the students who attend a District school are enrolled in a neighborhood school. Therefore, in order to improve opportunities and outcomes for the most students living in this city, it is imperative that the District focus on strengthening neighborhood schools. We will do this by prioritizing neighborhood schools as we implement many of the instructional and climate actions outlined in this Plan.

In 2012-2013, excluding charter and closure schools, less than half of the students attending neighborhood schools tested proficient or advanced on the PSSA Math and PSSA Reading. This was comparatively lower than 80% of their peers who attended special admission schools.

I. Create and launch new, evidence-based school models, and scale the ones that work. We will adjust our school models and classroom structures to reflect the needs of our students by expanding and replicating high-performing schools and programs, investing in new models, and encouraging flexibility and innovation in educational delivery.
New York City implemented a reform effort to establish “small schools of choice” (SSC) – small, academically nonselective four-year public high schools. With additional start-up resources and assistance as well as policy protections to facilitate leadership development, hiring and implementation there have been promising results. For example, after the first year of high school, 58.5% of SSC students were on track to graduate compared to 48.5% of non-SSC students. Furthermore, after four years, SSCs increased their overall graduation rates by 6.8 percentage points.41

J. Be a great charter school authorizer to ensure all charters are good school options, and promote the sharing of successful practices across all schools. The District will support the School Reform Commission (SRC) in becoming a top-quality charter school authorizer by improving the quality, clarity, transparency, and consistency of the SRC’s charter school authorizing practices through the Authorizing Quality Initiative (AQI).42 In becoming a great charter authorizer, the SRC will both promote and expand high-quality public school options and actively seek the non-renewal and revocation of the lowest-performing charter schools. In addition, as a part of this work, the District will continue working on behalf of the SRC to ensure all charter schools have signed charter agreements and manage their enrollment to ensure that they stay within their enrollment limits, to facilitate the equitable and successful distribution of resources across families of students in District and charter schools and within the charter sector.

The 86 charter schools in operation in Philadelphia enroll approximately 60,000 students. The number of Philadelphia students enrolled at charters has expanded by over 45,000 since the 2003-2004 school year. While there are many examples of charters driving transformational change, charter school performance, like that of District schools, is variable. According to the State School Performance Profile 37 out of 86 charter schools achieved a “good school” state rating, i.e., a score of 70 points or better.

K. Develop and implement a school progress measure. We will develop a School Progress Report to measure and communicate the performance of both District and charter managed schools across key indicators that reflect the feedback of parents and educators and are also aligned with District priorities. This new measure will also help the District hold District and charter schools to the same high standards of academic performance, equity and safety.

School report cards can help increase transparency, establish a basis for accountability and provide tools for effective management, ultimately helping parents, teachers and school officials assess school performance and status, and develop the most effective interventions and supports.43

L. Provide a clean and comfortable building environment in all schools. We will improve the physical and environmental condition of buildings and transform buildings into welcoming and inviting spaces. Specific work will include executing our collaborative labor plan with 32BJ/SEIU 1201, implementing a work order management system, executing a facility condition assessment study, undertaking customer surveys and executing a more aggressive preventative maintenance plan.

School building design and building conditions have a measurable impact on student achievement. Researchers have found a “5-17 percentile point difference between students in poor buildings and those in standard buildings.”44

“Make schools a place where people WANT to go. Where do you work? Is it somewhere bright, clean and cheerful? Why shouldn’t schools be the same?”

–Elementary School Teacher

M. Continuously update and refine the system-of-schools plan, including expansions and replications of good schools, and transformation or closure of chronically under-enrolled and under-performing schools. We continue to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based, transparent decision-making system for all our schools
to ensure that good schools are supported and promoted, good schooling ideas flourish, and poor-performing schools are not left to languish. To this end, we are implementing a revised way of making decisions about our system of schools, including transparent processes, clear expectations, and follow-up actions.

The School District of Philadelphia has some of the best performing schools in the state; we have selective admission schools; we have career academies and neighborhood schools; we also have schools struggling to get more than 50% of their students reading and completing math on grade level. Therefore, in order to support all of our students we must simultaneously review schools on an individual basis but also as a collective

Strategy 3: Identify and Develop Exceptional, Committed People

Our ability to achieve our Anchor Goals depends on the ability of everyone in the District – our full team – to execute the Actions identified in this Plan. We are therefore committed to supporting our staffs’ continuous professional growth and development, as well as ensuring exceptional people continue to choose the District, and choose to stay.

A. Improve recruitment and hiring practices to attract the highest quality candidates. It is crucial that we continue to recruit, hire, and retain quality teachers, principals and central office staff to successfully execute the Actions in this Plan. Practices that would help advance this action include: recruiting and hiring talented teachers and hiring them in a timely manner, strengthening the principal pipeline and identifying principals with strong leadership capacity; and improving placement practices to better match employees’ skills with position requirements. To help advance our goal of improving early literacy, the District will prioritize the hiring and placement of high quality teachers and principals in elementary schools.

With aggressive recruitment, districts receive more applicants than they need to fill existing vacancies; however, delays in job offers result in the withdrawal of between 31 to 60 percent of applicants with the majority (50 to 70 percent) of applicants indicating the hiring timeline as a major reason for taking another position. Consequently, districts are often forced to fill their vacancies with less qualified candidates.

“...[p]eople, not programs, impact student performance. Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.”

- Middle School Teacher

B. Strengthen the principal and teacher pipelines. The District will work to actively prepare new leaders from our cadre of high-performing educators. We will also promote residency years for aspiring leaders and will build stronger, more actively-managed relationships with our core relevant partners including higher education institutions.

School leadership ranks second only to teacher quality in its impact on student achievement, and cultivating a strong pipeline of school leaders by investing in leadership pathways has proven to produce highly effective school leaders. According to over 10 years of research by the Wallace Foundation, building a strong pipeline of school leaders requires that districts clearly detail the rigorous requirements for school leadership positions, provide high-quality training for aspiring leaders, engage in selective hiring, and offer solid on-the-job support and performance evaluations.

C. Celebrate, reward, retain and promote high performing staff, particularly great teachers and principals. Given the District’s investment in recruiting and training our high-performing employees and, more importantly, their contribution to improving student achievement, it is crucial that we retain high performing
staff by providing them with opportunities for on-going growth in their current roles, leadership
development, and/or other advancement possibilities.

Retaining our highest performing teachers improves student outcomes in both the short- and long-term. According to research, “when a high value-added teacher enters a school, end-of-school year test scores in the grade he/she teaches immediately rise and students assigned to such high value-added teachers are more likely to go to college, earn higher incomes, and are less likely to be teenage mothers.”

D. Support the continuous development of all personnel – tailored to individuals – including an emphasis on school-based coaching for principals and teachers. Teachers, principals and central office staff must be equipped to succeed in their roles. As our system evolves and improves, we will support our personnel in their efforts to adapt and enhance their skills to meet the changing demands of their jobs. Specifically, we are committed to providing effective and intensive development opportunities to support principals in the implementation of “high performing school practices” (see Exhibit 3), by focusing on improving principals’ abilities to serve as instructional leaders and the operational managers of their schools. We will also support teachers in the implementation of “highly effective instructional practices” (see Exhibit 4).

Effective professional development matters. When principals are given the support, feedback, and resources to be effective, teacher performance, student achievement, and school quality improve. From a teacher perspective, job-embedded professional development — such as literacy coaching — has demonstrated increasing improvements in student literacy learning which persisted over time. For example, on average, students in 17 schools that participated in a literacy coaching program made 16% larger gains in the first year than students whose teacher did not participate in the program; these gains increased to 28% in the second year and 32% by the third year.

E. Create meaningful opportunities for teacher collaboration and for principal collaboration. We will promote teacher collaboration by supporting or creating meaningful supportive and knowledge sharing opportunities for teachers in formal and informal groups, cohorts, and networks both within and between schools. To advance our goal of improving early literacy, the District will provide professional development focused on differentiated reading and literacy strategies and interventions.

A recent study of New York City public school teachers found that “social capital” among teachers—defined as the quality and frequency of interaction and collaboration—“was a significant predictor of student achievement gains above and beyond teacher experience or ability in the classroom.”

“Teachers need time to work as a team.”

- Elementary School Teacher

F. Collaborate with the City and other partners to make Philadelphia a premier place for principals and teachers to work. We believe that Philadelphia is a special place to work and live, and that our schools are special places within the city. We will collaborate with teachers, principals, community organizations, city agencies and private enterprise to get the word out: we are making our schools great, and we need exceptional people to join us in this endeavor. Specific steps here include support for reduced-price housing for teachers, the promotion of Philadelphia through local and national networks, multi-city job fairs, the promotion of school successes, and collaboration with the City of Philadelphia.

To address the need for high-quality teachers and principals, districts are partnering with postsecondary institutions and non-profits to establish teacher pipelines, and cities and states are providing tax credits to developers who create affordable, supportive housing complexes for teachers and non-profit educational organizations.
G. Set clear expectations for teachers, principals, and support staff and implement regular performance evaluations. Defining roles and expectations allows leaders to communicate the activities and roles that they value in their employees. We will implement the Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness System as outlined in Pennsylvania Act 82 for teachers, principals, and school-based specialists, as well as a performance management system for all staff. In short, we will be setting and adhering to high expectations for all staff -- our teachers, principals, specialists, and central office employees.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Educator Effectiveness Project is currently piloting new educator performance evaluation systems, which will be implemented statewide for school-based professionals. Quality classroom-observation-based evaluations have been linked to improved teacher performance both during the evaluation period and in subsequent years, even for experienced teachers. Well-structured principal evaluations that provide timely, actionable feedback and District oversight of schools can strengthen leadership practices and have meaningful impact on student achievement.

“All educators must know what our expected outcomes are and provide clear directions to both parents and students alike.”
-
High School Assistant Principal

H. Engage teachers, professional networks, labor unions, and other partners to identify, explore, develop, and scale great ideas related to talent. The majority of the District’s labor force is represented by one of five union organizations. Therefore, in order to further develop and strengthen the District’s workforce, it is important that we work collaboratively with both our staff and the organizations that represent them to develop and scale practices that work. Furthermore, the District will continue to promote and support the many formal and informal professional educator networks in Philadelphia.

The District is made of up of 17,024 employees, 16,592 of whom are represented by our labor partners, including our 8,910 teachers, counselors, assistant principals, and principals.

Strategy 4: Become a Parent- and Family-Centered Organization

Parents and families are vital assets to our schools whose active engagement will help improve the achievement of our students as well as our overall system performance.

A. Actively reach out to parents to involve them in the achievement of the goals of their children’s schools, including the launch of an SAC in every school. We will support our parents’ efforts to be more actively and meaningfully engaged in supporting their children’s schools. We have School Advisory Councils (SACs) in 152 schools and will continue to expand the establishment of SACs to include every school in the District and will work to increase the number of parents participating in school-based family and parent groups.

Research has shown that increased engagement of parents leads to improved academic outcomes, including improved student language use and reading and writing skills.

“We need to include parents in the process of creating plans for student achievement, invite parents into school to see their students, and then continue to support parents with whatever they need for their child to succeed.”
-
Elementary School Teacher
B. Establish clear processes for parent and family input and ideas. The District will establish, publicize, and monitor multiple clear and consistent avenues for parents and families to express and resolve concerns. We will also seek parental feedback, either through surveys, focus groups, or town halls, on the effectiveness of our schools and our key departments.

Meaningful family engagement in schools enables our principals and educators to capitalize on our families’ knowledge of students and communities, which has been associated with improved academic, behavioral and social outcomes for students.

C. Provide parents with information about their students’ progress and how to support that progress. We will clearly articulate our expectations for learners at all ages and parents’ role in their children’s learning by providing parents with training, information, and necessary tools to support student learning. In short, we will empower parents and families with information, insight, and ideas on how to support students in their learning and how to hold schools and the District accountable for the delivery of high-quality educational opportunities.

Parents and families are an incredible source of support for students; a number of innovative practices around the country have illustrated the powerful impact of parents and teachers collaborating on student learning. In addition, parents and families throughout Philadelphia and elsewhere have demonstrated an ability to advocate for and support better outcomes for their children.

D. Provide parents and families with excellent customer service. Parents and families are critical partners in our work to educate their children. As such, it is essential that we provide them with a welcoming environment in our schools and at the central office, including improving the quality and accessibility of the District’s call center by establishing a call-ticketing system and launching the Knowledge Base, a parent-developed initiative serving as a one-stop-shop for parents to obtain immediate answers to frequently asked questions.

We work on behalf of the public, for the public. At parent meetings around the city and in recent SRC Strategy, Policy and Priority meetings we have heard from parents that they expect better experiences with schools and with central administration.

“Parents should not have to work through a tangled system to make sure they are getting all they can out of the school system.”

—Elementary School Teacher

E. Provide parents with ample information on schools, and increase the equity and transparency of the school selection, transfer, and placement process. Parents are better able to support the academic needs of their children when equipped with the necessary information. Toward that end, the District is committed to providing parents with frequent and transparent information about their children, our schools, and our performance as a system through ParentNet. We will integrate information requested by parents into our School Progress Report framework, leverage and utilize the multiple means of communication currently at our disposal, and clearly articulate and streamline processes associated with student enrollment, transfer and placement.

During the 2012-2013 school year, 63,316 District students were placed or transferred between and among schools. Of these, 34,962 participated in the high school selection process.
Strategy 5: Become an Innovative and Accountable Organization

In addition to having talented individuals to help execute this Plan, to do this work most efficiently and effectively it is important that we coordinate and align our efforts and hold ourselves and each other accountable for our progress. We also need to create essential space for innovation and build a performance-oriented culture focused squarely on students.

A. Cultivate and sustain partnerships at the system and school levels. We will form new, and cultivate existing partnerships in an effort to supplement the progress schools have made in order to improve children’s academic, social, and emotional development and better support families. The District will continue to develop and maintain partnerships with philanthropic, business, non-profit, higher education and community organizations and others, and collaboratively determine where and how our partners can support our goals. The District will also maintain and expand collaboration opportunities with current City and institutional partners to provide and prioritize academic and behavioral supports, ensure student safety, and offer extra-curricular opportunities for our students in the early grades. The District will work with our partners to promote kindergarten attendance and will work with citywide pre-K providers to create a common understanding and expectation associated with Kindergarten readiness.

During a period of significant financial challenges and transitions, City agencies, philanthropic and community organizations, and families have been extraordinarily supportive of the District and its schools. Over $10 million was secured in SY12-13 to support the transition of District students, to enable the expansion of high quality schools, and to help sustain important student-focused programming.

B. Transform the organization by instituting strategic management processes at all levels and building a culture of excellence. Strategic management provides a rigorous approach for communicating organizational goals, prioritizing and pursuing highest impact strategies, tracking progress against targets, evaluating and adjusting strategies based on data, holding the organization and team members accountable for progress toward collective goals, and identifying and celebrating individual and team contributions to overall efforts. We will implement strategic management tools to expand our capacity to more effectively, reliably, and efficiently achieve our Anchor Goals, which are focused on student and school success.

We do not currently have strategic management processes in place across the District. High performing organizations incorporate a focus on results into their cultures, ensuring all people understand how to contribute to organizational success.

C. Improve data accuracy, application, and accessibility. In order to implement data-driven goals, it is critical that we ensure the accuracy of our data and the appropriateness of its application across the system – in classrooms, schools and the central administration. To facilitate this work, we will update the District’s core systems, implement a performance framework, and implement internal processes that incorporate the use of data.

Currently, many management decisions are made in the absence of data. Strong organizations understand their goals and track progress in order to justify decisions and make necessary course corrections. At the school-level, effective and timely data can help drive instructional and curricular changes, student interventions, and resource-allocation decisions.

D. Implement effective, aligned business processes. Efficiency and alignment of our organizational structures are critical to the effective implementation of reform efforts. This work includes, but is not limited to, the re-engineering of our position control system, our automated routing system, and our facility work order system; improving the cost and quality competitiveness of procurement services; automating additional
business processes where possible; and providing training on core systems to ensure that staff understand and can utilize systems relevant to their work.

In order to effectively execute the District’s Anchor Goals and strategies, the District must take the initiative to realign its business practices to reflect a more efficient working environment.

**Improve communication throughout the organization and to the public.** The District can build and maintain momentum for the excellent work performed by our staff through frequent, transparent and consistent communication of expectations and progress across all levels of the organization. We will start by redesigning our internal meeting structure to include regularly scheduled meetings dedicated to data-focused, collaborative problem solving, and by establishing teacher and principal advisory groups to improve communication with school-based staff. Furthermore, much of the great work underway at, and many successful programs within, the District remain under the public radar. The District has made and will continue to make a concerted effort to call attention to and highlight the innovative, productive, and excellent work that our staff and students do on a more frequent, consistent and transparent basis.

Communication is a core competency that, when properly executed, can help ensure successful project implementation by connecting the team to a common set of strategies, goals and actions. Clear communication can help foster organizational coherence, which ultimately improves the effectiveness and sustainability of reform efforts.

**E. Actively promote innovation and cross-functional design thinking.** As a system designed to promote excellent educational experiences for children, we expect our own organization, from central administration to all our schools, to be a “learning organization.” This means we expect all elements of our organization – from classrooms to transportation depots, parent engagement centers to staff development functions – to be flexible enough to respond to information as it comes in, to solve problems quickly and efficiently, and to collaborate with a variety of colleagues (and not live in silos). This mindset and organizational philosophy will lead to better outcomes for students and families.

At the school level working in teams can improve school performance and sustain a continuous improvement process through empowering staff, creating a sense of ownership and fostering collaboration.

**F. Implement core student- and teacher-facing systems for schools, including a Learning Management System and a Student Information System.** In order to meet the growing need to use data to drive accountability in both financial practice and instructional change, the District must position itself to modernize its core systems. The District currently operates on a 13-year old legacy Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and a 25-year old Student Information System (SIS).

Accurate and accessible data is of utmost importance for school districts that use data to inform their policies and for educators who use this information to inform their practice.

**G. Improve quality and lower cost of transportation services.** We remain committed to getting all students to school safely, on time and with less than an hour of travel time. This means we will continue to roll out GPS on all our buses and work to optimize all of our route times. Additionally, we will actively review bell times and look into consolidating pick-up locations in the interest of providing much better transportation services to the majority of our student riders.

A recent research study on long bus rides indicated that students with “large average times on a bus report lower grades and poorer level of fitness, fewer social activities and poor study habits. Furthermore, given the importance of a healthy breakfast on student achievement, it is imperative that school buses arrive safely, and on-time to enable students to participate in the school breakfast program.
Strategy 6: Achieve and Sustain Financial Balance

The District’s future depends on our ability to efficiently and effectively manage our resources and obtain additional revenues. Through this Strategy, we will put into place Actions that ensure our expenditures do not exceed our revenues while continuing to aggressively seek additional revenues to meet the District’s strategic priorities.

A. Seek additional revenues. Attainment of additional revenues, both private and public, will supplement our limited resources to allow us to better serve our students. The District will continue to seek additional, recurring revenues from the State and the City to help ensure financial sustainability; leverage the Office of Strategic Partnerships to establish partnerships to supplement the work of schools, with a focus on early literacy, until recurring revenues are secure; and apply for and manage grants that meet the needs of our students and systems.

As a result of the end of stimulus funding, historically low levels of state education funding, and stagnating local tax revenues, revenues received by the District have significantly diminished. After over $300 million in budget cuts in 2012, the School District is a “bare bones” operation. We must actively pursue additional recurring sources of revenue, including better collection efforts with the city, in support of our commitment to improve student academic outcomes.

B. Continuously identify savings opportunities and capture identified cost savings. In order to help meet ongoing fiscal challenges, the District has identified and is implementing a series of cost savings measures.

Over the course of the next five years the District is expected to save over $120M through a series of cost savings initiatives.

C. Meet the immediate financial challenges of Fiscal Year 2014 and Fiscal Year 2015. As we prepare for Fiscal Year 2015, it is critical that we do not exceed our expected expenditures in Fiscal Year 2014. Therefore, we must implement strict financial controls, be strategic in our resource allocation process and continuously track progress to ensure fiscal stability in Fiscal Year 2014. Moreover, to begin to address the challenges of Fiscal Year 2015, the District must seek additional recurring revenues to replace the various one-time revenues it received in Fiscal Year 2014.

In Fiscal Year 2014, the District requested $304 million in order to provide students with the same level of educational services as was received in Fiscal Year 2013; however, the District received $112 million in revenues, of which approximately $95 million in was non-recurring. These revenues enabled the District to open schools with the minimal number staff and resources required to do so, a staffing level that was far below the allocations schools received in Fiscal Year 2013.

D. Continuously analyze the impact of spending, and deploy resources to achieve priorities, including the activities, schools and programs that need them the most. The District must continuously review our investments and the effects they have on student achievement. We will work to identify our desired student and system level outcomes and will allocate resources towards strategies that have proven effective in achieving those identified outcomes. If and when we determine that programs are ineffective, we will stop investing in them. We will also pilot a student weighted funding formula by allocating resources to schools based upon the number and needs of the students they serve.

The District invests over $1.4 billion in the education of approximately 131,000 District students.

E. Develop a comprehensive, outcomes-focused budgeting strategy, including five year planning. Many school districts tend to budget based on prior expenditures and long-established formulas. However, to facilitate our ability to reach our goals, we will work to establish an outcomes focused budgeting strategy which takes into
account both the short- and long-term implications of our decisions. We will start by implementing an annual, standard, data-driven budgeting process across operating, capital and grant budgets to improve financial sustainability as well as organizational efficiency, transparency and innovation.  

Disciplined resource allocation is fundamental to achieving sustainable results in public education. Budgeting is an essential vehicle for prioritizing and planning, gathering stakeholder input, communicating with funders, and ensuring organizational alignment and accountability to our most important work—educating students.

F. Institute financial controls. Incorporating fiscal discipline and control helps us manage and better understand our spending. The District will institute financial controls at all levels of the organization, including incorporating good financial stewardship as part of principal and program manager training, supports and evaluations.

With the limited financial controls currently in place, our organization is at tremendous risk for fiscal mismanagement and inefficiencies. We must ensure our principals and program managers, the day-to-day financial managers of our District, receive the training and support necessary to be effective, responsible financial stewards.

G. Align capital and grants programs in support of Anchor Goals. Our organization has developed certain “habits” of spending both capital dollars as well as Federal grant dollars. While these allocations from capital and grants have served the organization well historically, it is critical in this moment of serious fiscal austerity that we ensure all spending from all sources conforms with this Action Plan, in support of our Anchor Goals. Toward this end, we will implement a new “capital call” planning cycle, review all grant spending, and incorporate both capital and grant budgets alongside our operating budget within the five-year planning process.

The School District of Philadelphia’s Capital Budget for FY14 is $134 million and its grant budget is $336 million.
PART III: Where We Go From Here

The plan described above is part of a process. Much of what is described here has already started, or is ongoing. Some Actions will be new, done differently, or done better. And all Actions are subject to review and revision. As with Action Plan v1.0, this document will evolve with time. That said, there is a clear path forward.

Our specific next steps are:

1. **Begin implementation.** We will define timing, metrics and targets, identify owners, and develop implementation plans for all Actions included in the Plan with a specific focus on activities that will advance the District’s early literacy goal.

2. **Set up systems and routines to drive progress.** There will be weekly reviews of progress toward our targets. Collectively, we will engage in solution-oriented, data-driven problem solving sessions in support of the realization of our commitments and to resolve implementation challenges.

3. **Drive the FY 2015 budgeting process.** This Action Plan will serve as a major input into the District budgeting process. All central office departments and schools will be asked to align their work and budgets to the priorities set forth in the Action Plan.

4. **Refine through stakeholder input.** We will incorporate input from staff and stakeholders to refine and further evolve the Plan.

   - **Principals** will be invited to utilize their Learning Networks (LNs) as a forum for discussion of and input into this plan. In addition, the principal advisory board will continue to be a source of school-level input into District policy and practices. We will also use the annual District-Wide Principal Survey to refine our understanding of principals’ needs and opinions.

   - **Teachers and other school-based professionals** will be invited to participate in building-level discussions and focus groups. We will continue to collaborate with teacher networks, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and other labor partners. We will also use the annual District-Wide Teacher Survey to refine our understanding of teachers’ needs and opinions.

   - **Parents and families** will be engaged through the Actions identified above in Strategy 4, as well as through the District parent advisory council and a parent survey.

   - **Students** will be invited to participate in "youth-friendly spaces" that will encourage their participation and engagement, such as the District-wide student government initiative and existing youth organizations. Student voices and input is also provided via the Superintendent’s student advisory board, and an annual student survey.

   - **Central administrative staff** will engage in quarterly "town halls" and will have ongoing opportunities to share input within teams, and executive staff will engage in monthly “executive team” meetings with District leadership.

   - **External partners** will be directly engaged through our Office of Strategic Partnerships.

Furthermore, stakeholders will be invited to provide input through a comprehensive planning process throughout 2014, which will ultimately inform the next iteration of this Action Plan.
Exhibit 1 – Inputs to Action Plan v2.0

Action Plan v2.0 expanded and improved upon Action Plan v1.0 which was developed inclusive of input from our employees, parents and families, and the broader community. All amendments in v2.0 were made in reference to input from our principals, assistant principals, teachers, school based support staff and central office staff. More specifically, in addition to a high reliance on the content of Action Plan v1.0, Action Plan v2.0 reflects input from the following sources:

- "Invitation for Input on District-wide Strategic Priorities" December 2012 survey through which 295 school-based staff provided input
- 2011-2012 District-Wide Public School Principal Survey
- 2011-2012 District-Wide Public School Teacher Survey
- Interviews with more than 30 district leaders, Assistant Superintendents, and program managers.
- Inputs and support from additional central office staff who offered their thoughts and feedback throughout the development of the Plan
- Focus groups and parent conversations during over 50 school visits and meetings conducted by Dr. Hite from September through December 2012
- Community meetings and interviews with over 35 groups across Philadelphia
- Feedback received at Parent School Progress Report sessions
- Feedback received at Stakeholder School Progress Report meetings
- Input from the SRC’s Strategy, Policy and Priorities meetings from parents, families, students, educators, community members and advocates
- Public testimony at monthly SRC public meetings

In addition, several strategic documents shaped the content of this Plan. These documents include:

- Action Plan v1.0
- Professional Development Handbook for School Leaders
- The Office of Career and Technical Education’s Five Year Strategic Plan for Quality, Access and Equity: Action Plan
- The Office of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment’s proposed RtII Model Plan
- Charter School Office Authorizing Quality Initiative documents
- The Five Year Financial Plan, Fiscal Years 2013-2017
- Renaissance Schools Initiative Progress Report: 2010-2011 through 2012-2013
- The School District of Philadelphia draft Academic Priorities 2012-2013
- Meeting Milestones: The Third Annual Report to Mayor Nutter From the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success
- A Blueprint for Action: Blue Ribbon Commission on Safe Schools, January 2012
- The Philadelphia Great Schools Compact, December 20, 2011
- College Board, Advanced Placement Data, 2009-2010
- Analysis and Findings of the SDP College-Going Working Group
• Ongoing work of the SDP Early Literacy Working Group
• Embracing the Challenge: A Five Year Blueprint For Increasing Achievement in Secondary Grades in The School District Of Philadelphia, 2008-2013
• The African American and Latino Male Dropout Taskforce Report, September 2, 2010
• Harvard University Strategic Data Project Human Capital Analyses, June 2012 and findings of the SDP Human Capital Working Group
• The Office of Charter Schools Strategic Plan Draft
• Strategic Planning for the School District of Philadelphia: Lessons Learned from Improved Districts, December 2012
• Financial Systems and Operations Working Group Report, July 2011
• Convectus Solutions, April 2011 Report
• A Blueprint for Transforming Philadelphia’ Public Schools: Safe, high-quality schools. Fiscal Sustainability.
• School District of Philadelphia, 2010-2011 High School Exit Survey
• SY2013-2014 Principal Handbook
• Student Code of Conduct
• Draft early childhood strategy
Exhibit 2 – How Did We Do? A Scorecard Against Action Plan v1.0

**Anchor Goal 1:** Improve academic outcomes for students in all the schools we manage and in the charter schools we authorize

**Anchor Goal 2:** Ensure the financial stability and sustainability of the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>= Significant Progress</th>
<th>= Some Progress</th>
<th>= Little Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Strategy 1: ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN FINANCIAL BALANCE

- **A.** Capture cost savings and track progress against the Five Year Financial Plan
- **B.** Meet the immediate financial challenge of Fiscal Year 2014
- **C.** Implement a data-driven budgeting process
- **D.** Institute financial controls
- **E.** Seek additional revenues
- **F.** Effectively manage grants

### Strategy 2: IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

- **A.** Utilize data to assess student needs
- **B.** Sustain high academic standards and expectations
- **C.** Advance the implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention
- **D.** Prioritize early literacy
- **E.** Cultivate academic tenacity
- **F.** Clarify the profiles of college and career ready graduates
- **G.** Track students’ progress to graduation, college and career
- **H.** Develop a high school improvement strategy
- **I.** Increase access to Career and Technical Education
- **J.** Meet the needs of students in Special Education
- **K.** Meet the needs of English Language Learners
- **L.** Improve alternative education
- **M.** Review outside educational institutions
- **N.** Improve student nutrition

### Strategy 3: DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF EXCELLENT SCHOOLS

- **A.** Improve school safety and climate
- **B.** Implement the Facilities Master Plan
- **C.** Enhance the physical environments of schools
- **D.** Clarify school autonomy
- **E.** Develop innovative school models
- **F.** Turn around low performing schools
- **G.** Become a top-quality charter school authorizer
- **H.** Collaborate with other school operators
- **I.** Develop school performance measure
Strategy 4: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP COMMITTED, CAPABLE PEOPLE

A. Enhance teacher recruitment and hiring practices
B. Implement teacher, principal and specialist evaluations
C. Strengthen teacher development
D. Create meaningful opportunities for teacher collaboration
E. Provide effective principal support
F. Increase capacity of principals and leadership teams
G. Strengthen the principal pipeline
H. Clearly define administrative staff roles and performance evaluations
I. Launch the Transformation Corps

Strategy 5: BECOME A PARENT AND FAMILY-CENTERED ORGANIZATION

A. Improve customer service
B. Launch additional, effective School Advisory Councils
C. Establish clear processes for parent/family input
D. Support the unique needs of parents
E. Empower parents with information

Strategy 6: BECOME AN ALIGNED, ACCOUNTABLE ORGANIZATION

A. Institute a change management program
B. Institute performance management processes
C. Improve data accuracy and application
D. Implement effective, aligned business processes
E. Invest in core systems
F. Ensure testing integrity
G. Cultivate and sustain partnerships
H. Update the organization structure
Exhibit 3 – SDP High Performing Schools Practices Based on the Research

The following High Performing School Practices for the School District of Philadelphia were developed as a collaborative effort between District teachers, principals, and central office administrators. Based on the most current research on effective schools, the following practices articulate the District’s baseline expectations for performance in every school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vision for Learning</strong></td>
<td>• School leaders developing, articulating, stewarding, and implementing a clear vision for learning for all students and a strategic plan to accomplish that vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All school stakeholders able to articulate a clear and shared vision for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Safety</strong></td>
<td>• A safe, secure and orderly environment for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Quality Instruction</strong></td>
<td>• Principals who are experts in high quality instructional practices that consistently promote excellent instruction school-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Principals who are visible in classrooms and teachers regularly receiving timely and constructive feedback on classroom instruction from school administrators and colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School leaders and teachers clearly communicating learning and development objectives that reflect high expectations for learning and growth, a belief that all students can learn, and a commitment to meet each student’s educational needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Environment</strong></td>
<td>• Collegial and professional relationships among staff and students that promote critical reflection, shared accountability, and continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Constructive management of conflict at all levels</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Talent Development</strong></td>
<td>• Teachers regularly collaborating on practice and providing each other with support and constructive feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Careful staff selection and effective assignment of staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Plans to support the professional growth of staff members that are differentiated based on identified needs and individual goals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A deliberate approach to building leadership capacity among staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data</strong></td>
<td>• The frequent collection, analysis, and use of multiple sources of data to guide continuous improvement in student achievement and well-being and professional development for staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and Community Relationships</strong></td>
<td>• Positive and collaborative relationships with families and communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For alignment with principal leadership framework, please see the SY2013-2014 Principal Handbook
Exhibit 4 – SDP Highly Effective Instructional Practices

Ensuring excellent instruction in every classroom is at the core of the School District’s work. Principal leadership and support of the District’s teachers to be able to implement high quality, standards-based instructional practices is of critical importance. To drive this process, a working group comprised of teachers, assistant superintendents, and curriculum administrators developed a set of highly effective instructional practices to serve as a core set of District-wide expectations for teaching. The practices for English language arts, social studies, science, and the technical subjects, as well as those for math, are listed below. Philadelphia school leaders are charged with developing expertise in the instructional practices both for themselves, and also among the staff. Through consistent observation and monitoring, principals will promote the implementation of the highly effective instructional practices using timely, constructive, and evidence-based feedback to teachers on their planning, preparation, and instruction in accordance with these practices. More information on these practices can be found on SchoolNet in the Outreach Collaboration Section by clicking on the “Instructional Practices” link.

| Instructional Practices for ELA, Social Studies, Science, Technical Subjects |
| Practice 1: An instructional objective (accessible to students, teachers and observers) linked to the content and a literacy standard |
| Practice 2: Curriculum-driven opportunities to determine the meaning of general and domain specific words and phrases (pre-reading and during-reading). |
| Practice 3: Lessons characterized by gradual release of responsibility (from teacher dependence to student independence) |
| Practice 4: Curriculum-driven reading opportunities characterized by a balance of informational (on a variety of topics, perspectives, and eras) and/or literary texts (from a variety of authors, topics, genres, eras, and traditions) |
| Practice 5: Curriculum-driven reading opportunities characterized by discipline-specific approaches to text. Students should regularly be taught, assessed, and re-taught (if necessary) the discipline-specific lens through which members of specific disciplines read, analyze, and make use of text. |
| Practice 6: Curriculum-driven reading opportunities characterized by careful, sustained interpretation of a variety of texts with an emphasis on: the quantitative measure; the qualitative measure; and the reader and task measure |
| Practice 7: Curriculum-driven opportunities to engage in evidence-based conversations about the text in whole group and small group settings |
| Practice 8: Multiple opportunities to use evidence from multiple sources on the same topic to compose an original text or to evaluate composition |

| Instructional Practices for Math |
| Practice 1: An instructional objective (accessible to students, teachers and observers) linked to the content and a worthwhile mathematical task |
| Practice 2: Curriculum-driven opportunities to determine the meaning of general and domain specific words and symbols |
| Practice 3: Lessons characterized by knowledge of student ability and the gradual release of responsibility (from teacher dependence to student independence) toward mastery |
| Practice 4: The consistent use of manipulatives to teach abstract mathematical concepts |
| Practice 5: A scope and sequence driven by the connection of new concepts as a logical extension of previously taught/mastered concepts (Coherent Instruction) |
| Practice 6: Lessons characterized by a balance of procedural fluency and conceptual understanding (Dual Intensity) |
| Practice 7: Homework aligned with the requisite concept necessary to demonstrate mastery of the content, concept, process under study |
| Practice 8: Multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate behaviors associated with the 8 Standards for Mathematical Practice |
| Practice 9: Teachers’ consistent use of the language of proficient mathematician (the 8 Standards for Mathematical Practice) throughout the gradual release of responsibility |

Elements of High Quality Instruction
(as defined in the High Performing School Practices)

Principals who are experts in high quality instructional practices that consistently promote excellent instruction school-wide

Principals who are visible in classrooms and teachers regularly receiving timely and constructive feedback on classroom instruction from school administrators and colleagues

School leaders and teachers clearly communicating learning and development objectives that reflect high expectations for learning and growth, a belief that all students can learn, and a commitment to meet each student’s educational needs
Exhibit 5 – SDP Functional Organization Chart Aligned with Action Plan v2.0

The School District of Philadelphia Action Plan v2.0

Exhibit 5 – SDP Functional Organization Chart Aligned with Action Plan v2.0

The School District of Philadelphia
Endnotes


5 Common Core standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards are generally:

- Aligned with college and work expectations;
- Clear, understandable and consistent;
- Evidence-based; and
- Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society;
  http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards


6 Common Core standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards are generally:

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  http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards

8 The state of Kentucky experienced a 28 percentage point decline in reading and a 33 percentage point drop in mathematics for its elementary-aged students. Similarly, after its initial administration of its Common Core-aligned assessment, proficiency rates for English language arts and math declined by 24 percentage points and 34 percentage points, respectively.


11 According to the Ounce of Prevention Fund, at-risk children who don’t receive a high-quality early childhood education are:

- 25% more likely to drop out of school
- 40% more likely to become a teen parent
- 50% more likely to be placed in special education
- 60% more likely to never attend college
- 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime


19 Summit Public Schools. http://www.summitps.org/our_results/


37 OECD (2011), "School Autonomy and Accountability: Are They Related to Student Performance?", PISA in Focus, No. 9, OECD Publishing. doi: 10.1787/5k9h362kcx9w-en


42 AQI Strategic Plan


