Baltimore City Public Schools’ Five-Year Strategic Plan 2016–20
Approved by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, December 2015
The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners began the work of strategic planning in 2011 which resulted in a clearly articulated mission, vision, goals, and priorities that form the foundation of this strategic plan. Now, with this strategic plan, City Schools is positioned to take the next step toward excellence and equity for all students. By 2020, City Schools will meet a set of clear goals in areas from improving students’ academic achievement to recruiting high-quality staff to ensuring inviting school buildings. We will increase parent and community involvement in our schools, improve our service to all stakeholders, and manage school and district budgets efficiently. That work is already under way and will continue through the five years of this plan.

With this strategic plan, the district has mapped out specifically what we need to do to ensure that all our students are on the path to success. Staff, students, parents, community partners, and other stakeholders provided their input in developing this plan and, on behalf of the Board, I thank the entire City Schools community for their active participation—and for their continued support in creating the schools Baltimore’s children need and deserve. Together, we will build a district where equity and excellence grow and thrive, and where all our students have opportunities to create bright futures for themselves and for our city.

Marnell A. Cooper
Chair
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
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Introduction

Every day, the Baltimore City Public Schools community works to provide excellence in education for every child. In classrooms across the city, students gain new knowledge and understanding, teachers learn new ways to support and connect with students, administrators and district office staff develop programs to meet a range of student interests and ensure schools provide a positive environment for learning. But until now, City Schools lacked a roadmap for advancing excellence systematically and equitably across all schools and programs to meet the needs of all students.

With this strategic plan, City Schools outlines the strategies it will pursue to advance its mission of excellence and equity. The plan takes as its starting point a framework of goals, priorities, and core beliefs established by the Board of School Commissioners and is supported by three pillars—student achievement, effective and efficient operations, and parent and community engagement—around which the district’s work is structured. It will serve as the district’s roadmap for the next five years (2016-2020), guiding development of implementation plans that will put the strategies into action in classrooms, schools, and central office. It provides clear direction and goals against which progress can be measured, including specific targets for increased student achievement, sound management, and effective stewardship.

City Schools’ success relies on the involvement of a large community: students, parents and families, school and district staff members, volunteers, community partners, education advocates, city leaders, and many other stakeholders. To be successful, the district’s five-year strategic plan must involve and receive the support of the community. For this reason, the district developed the plan over the course of several months, during which it sought a broad range of input to inform the plan’s development. Beginning in Summer 2015, Board members worked with committees of key district staff members to map out strategies aligned to each of six priority areas. Then during October and November 2015, the draft strategies were shared in face-to-face conversations with principals and the executive directors who support them, other district office staff members, high school students, the local philanthropic community, faith leaders, representatives from Baltimore’s Hispanic community, and other community partners.
To provide opportunities for parents, families, teachers, school staff, and the broader public to learn about and contribute to the plan, seven public meetings were held in communities around the city. School leaders were asked to register a school team including a staff member, parent, student (for high schools), and community member to attend the meeting in their neighborhood. Community organizations were enlisted to help promote the events and encourage attendance from other interested members of the public. More than 800 people attended meetings in October and November 2015, providing valuable feedback that helped shape this final plan. Finally, an interactive website was created where anyone with Internet access could read about the plan and provide general comments or ideas about specific priorities and strategies.

In response to the feedback received, the draft plan was refined. Language was clarified and made more accessible; jargon was removed and specialized terminology was defined. In some priority areas, additional strategies were added—for example, to ensure that students in specific populations such as English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted and advanced learners would receive attention. Similarly, strategies were added to ensure student needs would be addressed at specific times (for example, at transition points from elementary to middle to high school) and in specific areas (across disciplines, in career preparation, etc.).

Finally, growth targets were established to measure success in each priority area. Each target uses baseline data drawn from the current school year (or the recent past, when current year data are not available) and sets an ambitious but realistic target for the future. Over the next five years, progress toward the targets will be measured on an ongoing basis and documented each year in the district’s annual report.

With this strategic plan, its framework and goals, Baltimore City Public Schools is now positioned to accelerate its reform and the progress of its students. In this, the district will continue to engage the entire city and rely on the support of its thousands of stakeholders. Together, we can ensure that Baltimore’s children and youth receive what they need and deserve not only for success in school, but for success in life.
About City Schools

As the largest city in the State of Maryland and the 26th most populous city in the country, the City of Baltimore is also home to one of the country’s largest school districts. Since the first public school opened in 1829 with an enrollment of 269 students, Baltimore City Public Schools has grown to serve more than 80,000 students in a broad range of schools and programs.

Originally established under the authority of the City of Baltimore, since 1997 City Schools has operated under an expanded partnership of the city and state, with Baltimore’s mayor and Maryland’s governor jointly responsible for appointing members of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. The Board, in turn, is responsible for appointing the district’s Chief Executive Officer, who leads the district’s operations, ensures its performance in delivering high quality academic programming that promotes growth in student achievement, and guides implementation of strategic planning.

Below are key facts and figures about City Schools. For more detailed information about the district, visit www.baltimorecityschools.org.
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

The graphs below show the percentage of students scoring Level 1-3 (below or approaching expectations) or Level 4-5 (meeting or exceeding expectations) on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in 2014–15. Students who score at Level 4-5 are considered on track to be college and career ready. These graphs show the gaps in achievement that currently exist between Baltimore City students and students across the state; among our African American, Hispanic/Latino, and white students; and between our students who receive free and reduced-price meals and those who do not. Our strategic plan aims to close these gaps and raise the bar for all of our students.
Measuring Success

In order to determine whether or not the strategic plan is an effective roadmap to student success, the plan must include clear metrics to measure our progress and hold us accountable for results. While we will always aim for the ultimate target of all students being proficient and ready for success in college and careers, we know that we will need more time than the five-year time frame of this strategic plan to achieve that, especially given the baseline data that show our tremendous need for growth. Therefore, we have decided to include and emphasize metrics that measure improvement over time because building on this type of continued growth is what will allow us to ultimately reach our goal of excellence for every student.

The core metrics on the next page, associated with each of the six priority areas, most clearly define our progress and will be included in the district’s annual report to be released every September. Included in the appendix (pg. 27) are additional supporting metrics that will be available on the district’s website as a District Data Dashboard. These metrics provide a more detailed picture of our progress and will be updated on the district’s website as data become available.

In addition, the district will set implementation goals each year, so that progress can be measured on an ongoing basis and implementation adjusted to ensure we remain on track for reaching our established targets. In this way, the strategic and implementation plans should be viewed as living documents that will change according to identified needs so that we can achieve our ultimate mission and vision of excellence and equity for all students.

These measures, baselines, and targets were developed with input from multiple stakeholders and included analysis of existing data, trends, and projections; national and state benchmarks; and understanding of the impact of existing policies, strategies, and initiatives. Baseline data are based on results from the 2014-15 school year unless otherwise noted.
## Core Metrics

### PRIORITY 1  Quality Curricula & Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARCC performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READING PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READING GROWTH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASELINE data will be collected in 2015-16. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 3 READING PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH GROWTH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASELINE data will be collected in 2015-16. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAEP performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 4 READING PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 8 MATH PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of students graduating in five years</strong></td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### PRIORITY 2  Quality Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of effective and highly effective staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASELINE data will be collected in 2015-16. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### PRIORITY 3  Climate & Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who say school culture is safe and positive</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building utilization rate</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRIORITY 4  Parent & Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of families satisfied with schools</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRIORITY 5  Responsible Stewardship & Excellent Customer Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of satisfactory key performance indicators</td>
<td>33.3%**</td>
<td>200.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRIORITY 6  Portfolio of Great Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased enrollment</td>
<td>84,976</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>86,249</td>
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</table>

Percentage of successful schools

*Final administration of NAEP during the term of this strategic plan will be in school year 2018-19.

**Baseline data from the 2013-14 school year.
Foundational Elements

**MISSION**
Excellence and equity in education for every child at every level by focusing on quality instruction, managing systems efficiently, and sustaining a culture of excellence.

**VISION**
Every student will graduate ready to achieve excellence in higher education and the global workforce.

**DISTRICT GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

1. All students will achieve high standards and annual growth that lead them to graduate prepared to be independent, creative, contributing members of society (Priority 1: Quality curricula and instruction).

2. All students will benefit from transformational leadership at all levels of the organization that ensures the success of district initiatives and sustains a culture of excellence that leads to academic success (Priority 2: Quality staff).

3. All students will learn in environments that embody a culture and climate of excellence, mutual respect, and safety (Priority 3: Climate and facilities).

4. All students will benefit from increased family and community engagement that builds resources and opportunities for student success (Priority 4: Parent and community engagement).

5. All students will benefit from predictable, reliable, transparent management processes and systems that build internal and external trust and contribute positively to school outcomes (Priority 5: Responsible stewardship and excellent customer service).

6. All students will benefit from great schools that meet the needs of students and communities (Priority 6: Portfolio of great schools).

**CORE BELIEFS**

1. Students come first.

2. All students can achieve when we meet them where they are and give them what they need.

3. Strong school leadership and professional development for teachers and other educators are keys to accelerating student achievement.

4. Engaged families and communities are essential to excellent schools and increasing student achievement.

5. Decisions at all levels of the district must be made fairly, clearly, and openly.
Pillars of Excellence

Pillar 1: Student Achievement
- Effective School Leadership
- Effective Teaching
- Rigorous and Culturally Sensitive Content

Pillar 2: Effective and Efficient Operations
- Fiscal Stability
- Return on Investment
- World-Class Buildings and 21st Century Technology

Pillar 3: Family and Community Engagement
- Active Parent Commitment
- Collaborative Community Organizations
- Supportive School Climate
Quality Curricula & Instruction

City Schools will have quality curricula and instruction that provide rigor, engage students, raise the bar, and deliver targeted interventions to increase learning.

**GOAL:** All students will achieve high standards and annual growth that leads them to graduate, prepared to be independent, creative, contributing members of society.

The high expectations for learning outlined in Maryland’s college and career readiness standards are designed to ensure that all high school graduates are prepared for success in college or careers without needing remediation. But standards are just the first step. For our students to meet the standards, our teachers need high-quality curricula that translate those standards into day-to-day lessons—and teachers also must deliver their lessons effectively so that students master both the big ideas and the detailed content. Together, high-quality standards, curricula, and instruction are the foundation for high-quality learning and improved student achievement.

**STRATEGIES**

1.1 Align all curricula to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards to ensure clear expectations for what students should know and be able to do.

- Complete a comprehensive review of curricula in English language arts, math, and science (2015-16 school year)
- Use the results to establish a plan and schedule for regular curriculum revision that includes
  - Universal design for learning, a flexible framework to optimize teaching and learning for all students based on the science of how people learn which can be customized and adjusted for individual needs
  - Embedding of instructional technology
  - Instructional materials of different types and at different levels
  - Texts that are culturally and racially relevant
  - Common standards, expectations, guidelines, and distinctive programming across subjects
  - Alignment from grade to grade to ensure smooth transitions and progress in content from one grade to the next
  - Increased opportunities for delivery of content and instruction online and through digital media to support differentiation and personalization of digital and face to face learning
  - Accessibility for specific student populations, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted and advanced learners
  - A full menu of options and experiences for students
- Examine curricula in all other subject areas (e.g., social studies) to ensure students have access to a well-rounded educational experience
1.2 Strengthen school-based implementation of curricula, enrichment, and interventions.

- Regularly revise instructional models based on curricular alignment, research, and best practices
- Conduct ongoing professional development for district office, school leadership, and school-based staff
- Offer consistent, content-rich, ongoing, and timely support through
  - On-site support and coaching
  - Blended, or digital and face-to-face, learning opportunities
  - Community learning networks and communities of practice
- Support teachers in meeting the diverse needs of students, including use of interventions and enrichment
- Focus on critical areas for long-term student success:
  - Kindergarten readiness
  - Literacy (reading at/above grade level by grade 3; skillful analytic writing in all grades)
  - Mathematics (focus on key domains, including operations and fractions in grade 3, ratios and proportions in grade 6, and reasoning with equations and inequalities in Algebra I)

1.3 Streamline student assessments, align them to standards and curricula, and use the resulting data to inform instruction, identify student needs, utilize interventions, and monitor student progress.

- Create data tools to strengthen instruction
  - Support teachers to use a variety of student assessments, including daily and long-term assessments of learning, to adjust instruction and increase student learning
  - Align data reviews of student assessments through teacher and school leader coaching and professional development
- Develop a comprehensive reporting structure that allows students and parents/guardians to understand progress through
  - Online, real-time information
  - Student-led conferences that engage students in assessing their own learning
  - Revised report cards
- Balance the amount of time students are being assessed and the time students spend learning

1.4 Implement a system that provides a continuum of differentiated supports for principals and schools based on data documenting individual school needs, recognizes and builds capacity for innovation, and provides autonomy for school leaders based on results that show high-level outcomes for students.

- Ground supports in equity to ensure a quality education for every student
  - Align programs and practices to meet the needs of culturally and racially diverse communities, providing ongoing development opportunities for school leaders, students, and stakeholders
- Implement equitable, consistent, timely, and responsive instructional supports for every school based on data-determined areas of need
Focus school-based and systemic programmatic supports and development opportunities on specific student populations, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted and advanced learners.

Focus additional supports at transition years (pre-k to kindergarten, grade 5 to grade 6, grade 8 to grade 9, and grade 12 to postsecondary opportunities).

Develop the capacity of every school to make decisions that deliver results for every student.

- Create comprehensive support and development plans for every school leader that focus on cycles aligned to the district’s leadership framework; are based on school-level data gathered to assess the effectiveness of school initiatives and use of resources; create a community culture for learning; focus on instructional equity; and coordinate professional development across staff.

- Develop professional learning communities led by transformational principals to provide peer support, coaching and mentorship.

- Build and sustain content leads in every school identified systemically and by community learning networks for on-site support provided through the district office, and in-person and online professional development for school leaders in content knowledge and instruction for all school staff.

Provide maximum support to schools identified as having greatest need, including an instructional lead dedicated to supporting academics full time and working directly with content experts at the district office; intervention programs with ongoing professional development to support implementation; and strategic scheduling options (e.g., intervention blocks, enrichment blocks).

Increase flexibility for innovation in schools with demonstrated high capacity to support the needs of all learners, to include:

- Determination and implementation of professional development opportunities for school-based staff.

- New pilot programs, enrichment opportunities, or interventions.

- Demonstration sites for new initiatives.

- Space and platforms for sharing innovations and best practices among schools.

Provide coordinated intervention, acceleration, and enrichment for all students through supports that are responsive to individual student need (“multi-tiered system of supports”).

- Ensure that school leaders have access to key academic and behavioral data that serve as early warning indicators for students at risk of not graduating on time.

- Provide supports for specific student populations, including English language learners; students with disabilities, gifted and advanced learners, and those who are both gifted and have disabilities (“twice exceptional”); and students in need of academic interventions.

- Create multiple pathways to graduation to meet individual student need.

- Enhance alternative education programs leading to graduation for high school students who have fallen behind their grade-level peers.

- Implement a middle school program to provide a continuum of targeted instructional interventions for students who have fallen behind their grade-level peers, to include:
  - Analysis to determine causes and barriers for students prior to high school.
  - Pilot program based on data gathered in spring 2015, using case management to support replication and/or extensions across City Schools.

Targeted Support to Meet School Needs

Schools are as unique as the communities they serve, and each experiences unique opportunities, areas of strength, and specific challenges. A major theme throughout City Schools’ strategic plan is the use of data to identify those opportunities, strengths, and challenges, so that the appropriate support can be delivered where and when it is needed.

Strategy 1.4 in this section of the strategic plan, along with strategies 2.2, 3.1, and 6.3 in subsequent sections, describes a specific approach to targeting support based on school need. As this strategy is implemented, City Schools will establish data-based measures to determine school capacity and success in focus areas including student achievement, school climate, and school staff. Based on these measures, schools will fall into one of four tiers in each focus area. Schools with greatest need will receive the most intense levels of support, with deployment of resources, oversight, and guidance from the district office. At the other end of the continuum, schools with maximum capacity and that have experienced high levels of success will have increased flexibilities to allow for innovation.
1.6 Help schools strengthen a culture that promotes college and postsecondary opportunities.

- Implement a framework to guide schools and district office initiatives in the areas of postsecondary success and college and career readiness
- Provide all students with consistent, ongoing, and equitable exposure to postsecondary opportunities through
  - Partnerships with external organizations and postsecondary institutions
  - Preparation for success in meeting college entrance requirements (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT, college applications and essays)
  - Opportunities for students to enroll in college courses while in high school through dual-enrollment programs
- Revise schedules to ensure students have access to school counselors (or other appropriately trained school staff) and implement comprehensive guidance programs from pre-k to grade 12
- Expand scheduling models and options so that students have more opportunities for different educational experiences and supports that prepare them for college and/or careers
- Develop individual college and career plans for all students, starting in grade 6
- Expand Career and Technology Education (CTE) programming across the district, aligned with regional workforce projections and needs
  - Inform students about CTE pathways beginning in grade 6 and encourage middle school CTE participation
  - Provide CTE students with academic supports and industry exposure to strengthen readiness for industry certification
  - Provide CTE teachers with targeted professional development to ensure current knowledge of industry standards, in collaboration with industry and university partners
  - Work collaboratively with industry partners to connect students with job opportunities during and after completion of CTE certifications
- Provide students with more real-world experiences and applications for their learning, (e.g., college visits, job shadowing, internships)
- Expand and sustain rigorous programming across the district (see also Priority 6)
Quality Staff

a) City Schools will create an environment where staff find meaning and feel supported in the pursuit of improved student achievement.

b) City Schools will excel in recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective staff at all levels.

GOAL: All students will benefit from transformational leadership at all levels of the organization that ensures the success of district initiatives and sustains a culture of excellence that leads to academic success.

Research confirms what we know from years of practical experience: The most important action we can take to improve student success is to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom in every school in the city. Rigorous standards and strong curricula must be coupled with strong instruction. And because excellent teachers thrive in schools with strong leadership, principals also want and deserve support from competent administrators and district office support staff. Education is a “people” business, and for City Schools to achieve its mission and vision, the district must attract, support, and retain the most talented people available.

STRATEGIES

2.1 Continue initiatives to expand and strengthen the school leader pipeline.
- Strengthen the process used to identify and screen candidates for leadership roles
- Identify measures for tracking the health of the school leader pipeline
- Establish a consistent definition, qualifications, and expectations of assistant principals and provide them with supports and opportunities to grow in their current roles and in their careers
- Create a multi-year principal residency model
- Align professional development opportunities for school leaders and potential school leaders to individual need
- Coach principals on leadership practices outlined in the leadership framework
- Recognize exceptional principals

2.2 For schools identified as having greatest need (see strategy 1.4), provide strategic staffing support.
- Provide additional support for recruitment, selection, and school-specific marketing training designed to address staffing
- Establish earlier and more efficient staffing cycles
- Develop comprehensive school profiles to maximize match between schools and candidates
- Promote equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and staff for the highest-needs schools
2.3 Ensure a pipeline of teacher and principal candidates who understand the needs of students in an urban school district.

- Rebrand recruitment materials and messages
- Develop specific recruitment strategies to attract candidates for high-needs areas and schools
- Work collaboratively with institutions of higher education and alternative certification programs to identify candidates who are prepared specifically to work in Baltimore City Public Schools
- Use alternative certification programs in strategic ways to secure employment commitments from high potential teacher and principal candidates earlier in the school year, competitive with surrounding districts
- Implement an electronic system for recruitment, applicant tracking, and onboarding of new employees, differentiated based on employee category (e.g., school leader, teacher, paraprofessional, district office staff)

2.4 Provide strategic staffing support to principals aligned to school performance plans.

- Include vacancy, equity, and structural and systems enhancement goals for all positions
- Increase retention of most highly effective teachers and staff

2.5 Manage and coordinate professional learning through one district department, so that staff has differentiated opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to become more effective in their roles, best meet the needs of schools and students, and advance in their careers.

- Offer a diverse menu of professional development options
- Align development opportunities with evaluation processes to ensure staff members receive the supports necessary to be successful
- Create, strengthen, and use effectiveness frameworks differentiated for all employee groups to evaluate performance
- Use evaluations to drive development opportunities, compensation, and retention
- For school leaders:
  * Focus on providing professional development to strengthen instructional leadership to best meet the needs of schools and students
  * Provide “choice” professional learning communities organized by areas of interest and led by transformational principals and “geographic” learning communities to address best practices in leadership and instruction
- For teachers:
  * Collaborate with internal and external partners (including unions) to provide professional development opportunities for ineffective and developing teachers, using a personal learning platform with online components
  * Develop and support a comprehensive induction model consisting of professional development for all new teachers and individual mentoring to reflect individual school contexts and teacher needs
  * Design a structured professional development schools model in collaboration with institutions of higher education to improve the quality of teacher preparation, strengthen teacher leadership within schools, and build the teacher recruitment pipeline
  * Collaborate with internal offices and external partners to expand and strengthen the capacity of lead teachers to support school goals and priorities
  * Create a catalog of professional development options to support teacher growth
Climate & Facilities

a) City Schools will have a respectful culture and climate and a collaborative environment that supports student achievement.

b) City Schools will have high-quality, modernized facilities that show respect for staff and students.

GOAL: All students will learn in environments that embody a culture and climate of excellence, mutual respect, and safety.

Students learn at high levels and staff members are more successful in their work when they are in an environment where they are respected, engaged, and safe. Our schools must be places where positive relationships are visible among students and adults, where clear expectations are in place for all members of the school community, and where "wrap-around" services are available for students in need of counseling and other support. Our buildings must be welcoming, clean, and well maintained to support 21st-century learning—and to demonstrate that we value our students, staff, and communities. And our students and staff must feel safe, physically, mentally, and emotionally. When these things are all in place, our students can thrive.

STRATEGIES

3.1 For schools identified as having greatest need (see strategy 1.4), provide strategic support.

- Utilize a support team from district office that has expertise in addressing climate challenges to build leadership and structures to support schools with climate challenges
- Identify a “climate lead” at each school to act as a liaison between the school and district office to support the school’s climate strategy
- Provide training in group facilitation as an approach to conflict resolution with a focus on student behavior
- Provide professional development for student support and 504 plan teams to facilitate implementation of intervention programs in core areas of attendance, behavior, and academics
- Deploy school support liaisons to provide specialized knowledge of climate and culture interventions

3.2 Build positive school culture through engaging experiences that engage and energize students to participate fully in their education.

- Use character education modules
- Set schoolwide expectations for and model appropriate behavior and language
- Recognize positive behavior
- Use positive behavioral intervention and supports across the district
- Implement restorative practices in elementary schools, an approach that addresses conflict by building healthy relationships and a sense of community
- Implement restorative justice in high schools with more than 500 students, in which victims, offenders, and community members meet to determine how to “right the wrong” and repair harm caused by negative behaviors or actions
- Train and use peer mediators in secondary schools
- Use differentiated mentoring programs to reach students with differing levels of need
3.3 Develop attendance plans for all schools.
- Include individualized plans for students experiencing or at risk for chronic absence
- Include incentives for strong attendance

3.4 Provide authentic opportunities for students to engage in school- and district-level issues related to their education, starting in middle school.
- Expand activities in schools that are engaging to students
- Increase students’ participation in student government
- Hold an annual high school leadership summit

3.5 Develop and implement a school policing strategy that draws on best practices to support student success, ensures school safety, and builds strong relationships among school police officers, students, teachers, administrators, and communities.

3.6 Design, coordinate, and implement a system of wrap-around supports and services within the district and with city and community partners to provide for students’ emotional, behavioral, mental, and physical health needs.

3.7 Institute clear and consistent school cleanliness and safety standards.
- Inspect school facilities on a regular basis
- Incorporate meeting these standards as a component of performance evaluations for cleaning staff and contract cleaning services

3.8 Implement sustainable practices throughout the district that focus on energy and resource conservation and green cleaning to create efficient, sustainable, and healthy buildings for students and staff.

3.9 Implement a comprehensive maintenance management system to more efficiently and equitably meet the maintenance needs of schools.
- Adopt a clear maintenance schedule
- Streamline work orders, preventative maintenance, asset management, and inventory management

3.10 Continue implementation of the 21st Century School Buildings Plan to bring high-quality modernized facilities to neighborhoods across the city.
- Increase the districtwide building utilization rate
- Update the district’s comprehensive preventative maintenance and capital improvement programs

21st Century School Buildings Plan
Beginning in fall 2010, Baltimore City Public Schools, the City of Baltimore, education advocacy groups, students, families, staff, and other stakeholders built a coalition of support for legislation and funding to modernize Baltimore’s public schools. With funds secured through passage of state legislation in spring 2013, work is now underway on the first new and renovated schools that will help transform student opportunities and achievement, provide jobs and resources to families, and help revitalize neighborhoods.

These new and renovated school buildings are designed to support excellence in teaching and learning with flexible and adaptable space, learning areas designed for interaction and collaboration, and technology-equipped classrooms, enabling students to meet today’s—and tomorrow’s—high standards. Strategy 3.10 in this section of the strategic plan and 6.3 in a subsequent section highlight specific ways that the buildings plan will contribute to the district realizing its priorities. But, more broadly, through the plan, the district and the city as a whole will benefit from:

- School environments that support teaching and learning to prepare students for college and career success
- Schools that become hubs of resources supporting entire communities
- Modern, efficient, and inspiring educational facilities that also provide for recreation and community use
- Partnerships that encourage businesses and neighborhood residents to connect with their local schools
Parent & Community Engagement

a) City Schools and all schools will partner with families, communities, and the public and private sectors to foster shared ownership of schools and collectively create opportunities for student success.

b) City Schools and all schools will more deeply engage parents in their students’ learning.

GOAL: All students will benefit from increased family and community engagement that builds resources and opportunities for student success.

Students are in school for about one-third of the day; the rest of the time, they are at home or in the community. To enhance what happens in the classroom, we must make it easier for families and community members to be supportive partners. This means communicating with families and other stakeholders clearly and in a timely way, listening and providing opportunities for input and acting on it, building and sustaining supportive partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and the faith-based community, and offering information and training for those outside schools who offer their support. Working together, we are more likely to achieve our shared goal of student success.

STRATEGIES

4.1 Develop effective methods to communicate clearly, strategically, and transparently about the work of the district and positive outcomes for children and families.

- Use data-driven analysis of district communications to improve planning, strategies, methods, and effectiveness
- Develop effective strategies and protocols to gather and disseminate news, updates, and announcements
- Expand use of digital media and technology in both district and school communications
- Place more news stories that showcase district progress and reform
- Develop enhanced training and toolkits for schools on how best to engage students, families, volunteers, and partners
- Engage students in developing and implementing the communications strategy

4.2 Create a sense of shared ownership in and accountability for the success of our students and our schools.

- Engage students, families, staff, and other community stakeholders in developing the district’s strategic plan
- Create regular opportunities for public input and meaningful community engagement around districtwide initiatives, decisions, and priorities
- Deepen relationships with local businesses, volunteers, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education
- Increase opportunities for student expression and hearing student voice
- Implement grassroots marketing in communities on modernized, closed, and consolidated schools to minimize attrition and increase enrollment
4.3 **Build teacher, leader, and parental capacity to work together to support student learning.**

- Work collaboratively with schools to strengthen organized parent groups and school family councils
- Provide consistent, structured learning opportunities with staff and parents and other primary caregivers
- Promote and expand families’ access to tools, information, and resources to support student achievement
- Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate resources, workshops, trainings, and materials to meet the needs of families who have limited English proficiency
- Develop, implement, and incrementally increase the use of rubrics that clearly communicate expectations and provide criteria to inform teacher and principal evaluations, demonstrating the overall effectiveness of district engagement strategies and efforts

4.4 **Strategically align public, private, and philanthropic resources to support the operational priorities of the district, schools, CEO, and Board of School Commissioners.**

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of school and community assets and resources as a basis for building more effective school, family, and community partnerships
- Oversee implementation of a new database to manage information regarding donors, constituents, and partners
- Create sound tools and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate effective partnerships
- Encourage, support, and recognize successful school and community partnerships and collaborations
- Implement evidence-based academic support strategies while continuously supporting broader family stabilization goals
Responsible Stewardship & Excellent Customer Service

City Schools will be good stewards of district resources and provide excellent customer service through innovative, integrated, and responsive management practices.

GOAL: All students will benefit from predictable, reliable, transparent management processes and systems that build internal and external trust and contribute positively to school outcomes.

To ensure that quality teaching can happen in the classroom, we must manage resources so that frontline educators receive the maximum amount of support. That means allocating budgets and other resources equitably across the city, strengthening infrastructure so that educators can focus on teaching and learning while others focus on operations, instilling a culture of service and partnership, and holding all staff accountable. These back-office operations are not always visible, but they are essential to a system of educational excellence.

STRATEGIES

5.1 Make budget decisions strategically at both school and district levels.
- Develop and use detailed five-year fiscal projections to identify major expense drivers
- Develop annual budgets not only to meet current-year needs but to ensure sustainability for the district over the long term

5.2 Align annual budgets with district goals to ensure equitable distribution of resources and prioritize student needs.
- Develop budgets to support and fund implementation of the strategic plan
- Revise and enhance Fair Student Funding, the current methodology for funding traditional schools to support schools’ needs in an equitable manner and to meet different student needs at a granular level
- Examine and build schools’ capacity to budget and manage funds and resources effectively

5.3 Restructure provision of health care benefits to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

5.4 Identify and monitor selected key performance indicators to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, including an initial set of indicators for growth and improvement.
- Examine the district’s procurement process and maximize procurement savings by improving the district’s competitive procurement ratio, providing opportunities for additional vendors, and increasing confidence in the district’s procurement process
- Decrease paycheck errors
- Improve timeliness of invoice payments
- Improve student transportation services, including on-time performance to decrease loss of instructional time and efficiency to manage costs
- Increase the fiber network and bandwidth to support expanded use of technology in classrooms
5.5 **Implement a new student information system to improve the accessibility and use of information and data to support student, parent, staff, and district needs.**

5.6 **Modernize and integrate finance and human capital systems to increase efficiency and decrease manual, paper-based processes.**

5.7 **Improve efficiency in handling incoming inquiries from all stakeholders.**

   ➤ Implement a call center at the district office to streamline call handling and improve customer service.
Equity means having excellent schools in every neighborhood. It also means giving students and families a range of options. We know that students learn in different ways and have different interests and strengths. To the extent possible, we need to accommodate those differences and create varied pathways to success. Of course, every student needs the basics of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, but we also must make time for the offerings that help engage and motivate students to learn. These include Career and Technology Education (CTE), world languages, inspiring fine arts, sports, and other physical education activities.

**STRATEGIES**

6.1 Analyze the current distribution of programs (supply) and where students are choosing to attend school (demand), to inform planning for equitable program distribution in regions across the city.

- Conduct a rezoning feasibility study to identify options for placing students in elementary and middle schools, taking into account factors such as building utilization, transportation, consolidation of programs, the opening of new schools, and access to high-quality academic programs

- Conduct an analysis to determine the factors that influence student choices for middle and high school so that enrollment projections become more predictable and can have a greater influence on portfolio planning and changes can be made to the choice process to increase access to programs closer to where students live

6.2 Determine the baseline requirements of a well-rounded educational experience (the “standard of care”) for all subject areas and all students, including those with specific talents, gifts, and interests.

- Focus on fine arts, physical education and athletics, advanced learning opportunities, world language opportunities, CTE, and science, technology, engineering, and math, developing a plan and three-year schedule for rolling out program options and the method for evaluating performance

- Ensure that programming determined by individual student need (e.g., English language learners, citywide special education programs) is available in all regions of the city

- Strategically plan and expand early learning programs and opportunities based on community need with consideration for building capacity and fiscal sustainability

6.3 Improve the quality of programming by implementing a portfolio strategy that offers a diverse mix of school options that meet student need and are responsive to informed stakeholder input.

- Create a consistent, easily accessible, and easily understood measurement system and reporting mechanism for the performance of all schools (traditional and operator run) in the areas of student achievement, climate and engagement, and talented people to determine where they fall on a spectrum of performance
Use this system in conjunction with factors such as enrollment trends and facility considerations in the portfolio review process to recommend changes in areas such as grade configuration, school programming, and school closure.

Use turnaround strategies and the expertise and experience of transformational principals and lead teachers, to turn around the lowest-performing schools.

Provide different levels of support to schools, with maximum resources deployed to those with greatest need and increased flexibility for innovation to those that are high performing.

Leverage best practices from successful high-poverty schools and best-in-class schools in various program areas to enhance performance at schools districtwide.

Attract highly successful school operators based on research and experience to create new programs and schools that fulfill needs in the portfolio.

Replicate successful programs and schools.

Leverage partners and build on the community school model to enhance schools throughout the district.

Ensure that the distribution of funds to schools supports the enhancement of the portfolio to meet the diverse needs of students.

Ensure alignment of academic priorities with school facilities in new and renovated 21st-century buildings, and use schools in the 21st Century School Buildings Plan to establish a blueprint for continued revitalization of Baltimore’s school portfolio through the acceleration of innovative academic opportunities that incorporate the latest technology for learning, such as virtual and distance learning.
## Appendix: Supporting Metrics

### PRIORITY 1 Quality Curricula & Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
<th>2020 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAEP performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8 Reading Proficiency</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 Math Proficiency</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MSA Science proficiency (grades 5 and 8)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students concentrating in Career and Technology Education (CTE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of CTE students graduating with certifications</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>108.7%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students meeting SAT college and career readiness benchmarks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>114.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students enrolling in college within 16 months of graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline data currently unavailable. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.

### PRIORITY 2 Quality Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
<th>2020 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of effective and highly effective staff retained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of school staff who feel supported</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of district office staff who feel supported</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline data will be collected in 2016-17. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.

### PRIORITY 3 Climate & Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
<th>2020 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students, staff, and parents who say culture is safe and positive</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of elementary, middle, and high school students chronically absent (20 days or more)</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>-25.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>-20.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>-22.8%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions</td>
<td>6,479</td>
<td>-24.2%</td>
<td>4,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of buildings meeting high cleanliness standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average days to complete work orders</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>-25.8%</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of energy from renewable sources</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of buildings (new and renovated) opened on schedule</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of buildings renovated and replaced on budget</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline data will be collected in 2016-17. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.
# Appendix: Supporting Metrics Cont’d

## PRIORITY 4 Parent & Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of parents to students who respond to school survey</td>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of families satisfied with central office services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family participation in organized school activities and groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of effective and highly effective partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of partners retained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline data will be collected in 2015–16. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.

## PRIORITY 5 Responsible Stewardship & Excellent Customer Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of school staff satisfied with district support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive fund balance (3–5%)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding of strategic initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of effective and highly effective vendors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Baseline data will be collected in 2015–16. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.

## PRIORITY 6 Portfolio of Great Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>% GROWTH</th>
<th>2020 TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading or Math proficiency in high-poverty schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of high-poverty schools that are high-performing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of elementary and middle schools with gifted and advanced learning and other distinctive programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic distribution of programming based on student need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseline data will be collected in 2015–16. Targets will be set once baseline data are available.
We would like to thank and acknowledge our students from the following schools for the beautiful artwork included in this strategic plan:

- Academy for College and Career Exploration
- Alexander Hamilton Elementary School
- Arlington Elementary/Middle School
- Armistead Gardens Elementary/Middle School
- Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts
- Baltimore Design School
- Belmont Elementary School
- Brehms Lane Elementary School
- City Neighbors Hamilton
- City Neighbors High School
- Commodore John Rodgers Elementary/Middle School
- Creative City Public Charter School
- Dr. Carter G. Woodson Elementary/Middle School
- Fallstaff Elementary/Middle School
- Forest Park High School
- George Washington Elementary School
- Gilmore Elementary School
- Highlandtown Elementary/Middle School No. 215
- Holabird Elementary/Middle School
- John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle School
- Liberty Elementary School
- Margaret Brent Elementary/Middle School
- Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
- Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School
- Monarch Academy Public Charter School
- Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School
- Northeast Middle School
- Northwood Elementary School
- Roland Park Elementary/Middle School
- Sarah M. Roach Elementary School
- Thomas Johnson Elementary/Middle School
- Vanguard Collegiate Middle School
- Western High School