



From Promise to Fulfillment:

Poughkeepsie City School District's Turnaround

VISION • JOURNEY • DESTINATION

**Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce
March Contact Breakfast**

March 17, 2021



Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, Superintendent of Schools

Introduction

Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, Superintendent of Schools, is an accomplished administrator with educational leadership, school turnaround, and operational management experience at the State Education Agency and Local Education Agency levels. He has a proven history of leading, managing, and coaching educational leaders and teachers, and designing and supervising effective instructional and student support initiatives.

Dr. Rosser has been involved with school turnaround initiatives since 2007, leading efforts at the local and state level and working directly with school principals in developing and strengthening academic and student support programs to meet the evolving needs of all learners. As a system's thinker, Dr. Rosser has overseen the implementation of reform initiatives in the Buffalo Public Schools, including the co-development of the District's Student Success Plan and many of the strategic initiatives of the Buffalo Public Schools' New Education Bargain, the system's comprehensive reform model. In his previous position as Deputy Assistant Superintendent for Elementary and Secondary Education of OSSE, Dr. Rosser oversaw the implementation of the District of Columbia's State Accountability School District Turnaround Model. He also led the establishment of the accountability system for early learning facilities and programs throughout the District of Columbia. In Atlanta, Dr. Rosser was responsible for the District's signature reform initiative designed to increase the academic outcomes of over 13,000 K-12 students in the school system's lowest performing schools.

Dr. Rosser understands all facets of school district operations. His unrelenting and courageous advocacy for children and families, ability to develop productive collaborative relationships with school leaders and community partners, affability, unwavering integrity, and commitment to all students distinguishes him as a Champion of Children.



Eric Jay Rosser, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Poughkeepsie City School District Mission

“We are champions of children who inspire and nurture the whole child by providing innovative, high-quality educational opportunities that prepare all students to embark on individual paths of success in a globally diverse community.”



Discussion Points

PCSD Background – What is the Poughkeepsie City School District context?

Problem Statement – What are we working to resolve?

PCSD's Strategy – What is our methodology to improve?

Milestones – What has our strategy yielded to date?

Next Steps – What is on the horizon?



PCSD Background

7 Schools

4300 Students

73% Economically Disadvantaged

850 Staff


60% 4 yr. Graduation Rate

Target District: NYSED Accountability Designation



Together, We are Champions for Children in Poughkeepsie City School District

Problem Statement

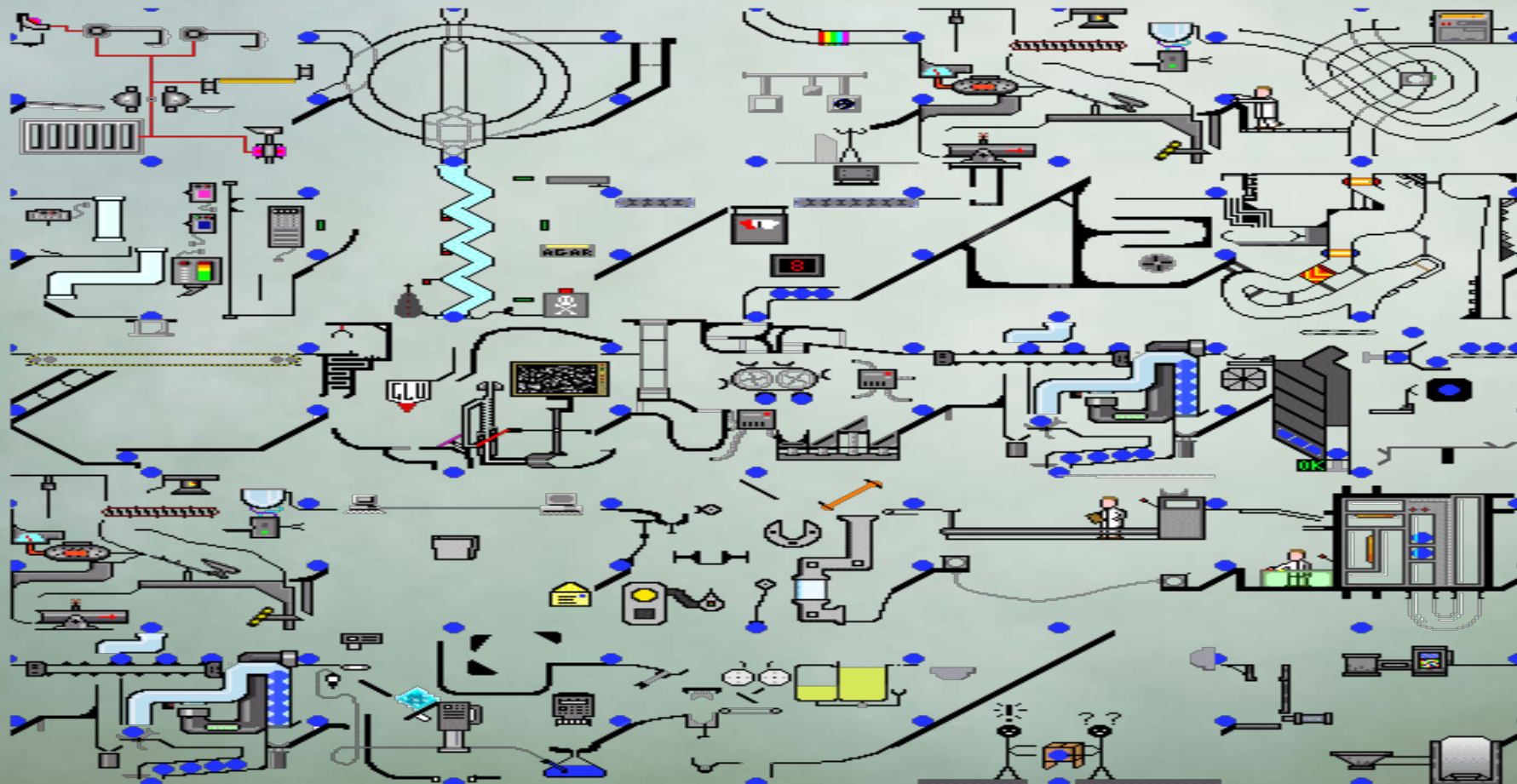
K- 8 Curriculum /Misalignment in Instructional Strategies from school to school		Disorganization (A Lack of Effective or Absent District Systems and Structures)
Content Rigor Concerns		Lack of Accountability Systems
Low K- 8 Student Performance		High level of Administrative and Teacher Turnover
Middle School Programming Concerns		Deteriorating Facilities
High Rates of High School Non-Completion		Concerning Financial Condition
Poor Graduation Rates		Concerns of School Culture and Safety
Student Supports Inadequate		Missed Opportunities for Students
Public Dissatisfaction with Schools		Lack of Metric Driven Strategic Plan
Need for increased District-wide Parent Partnership/Engagement		Need for increased Community Partnership/Engagement

* Note areas of Needs Improvement have been or are currently being addressed through the Poughkeepsie City School District's Strategic Plan.

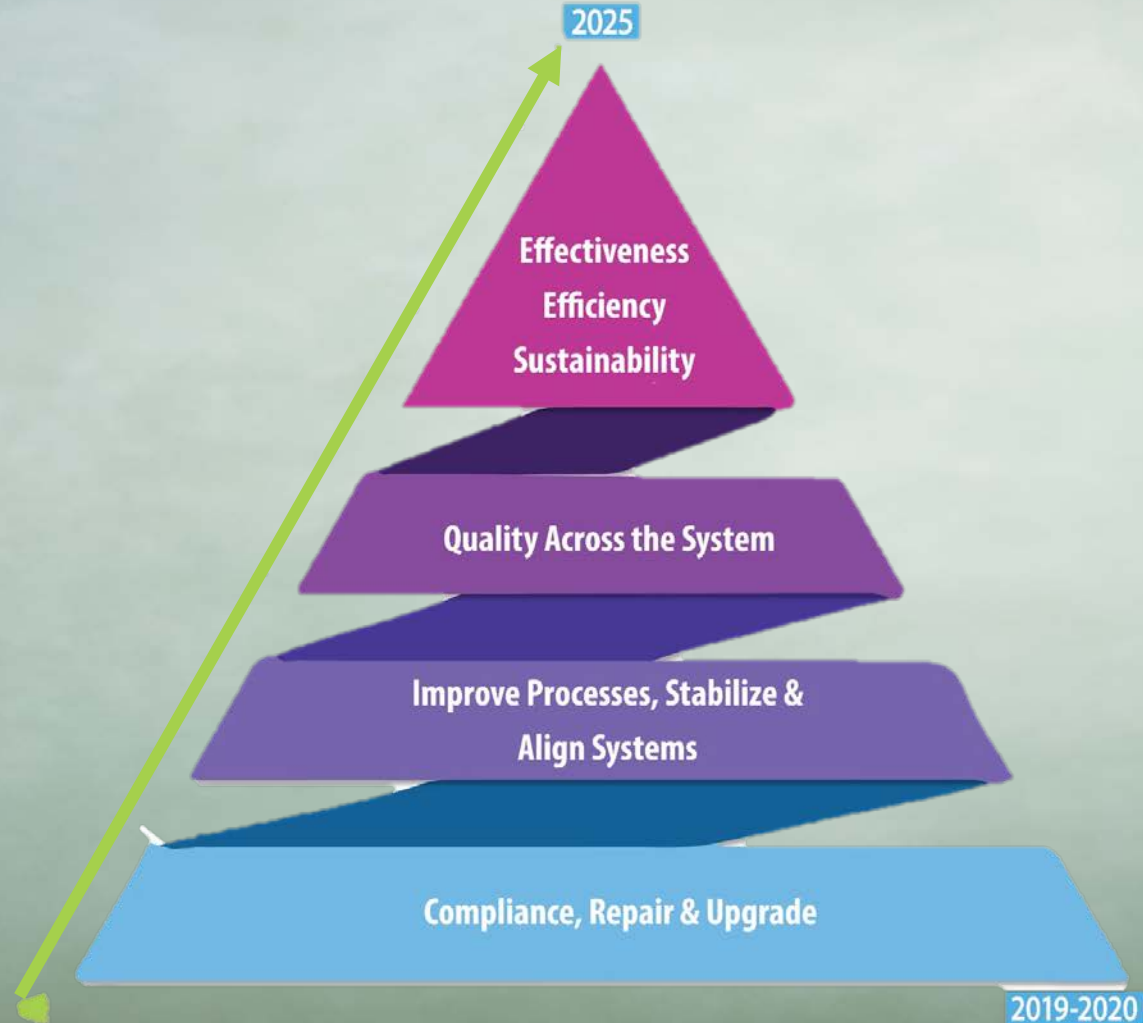


Poughkeepsie City School District before September 2019...

“Activity versus Productivity”



Poughkeepsie City School District Systems Thinking Methodology



2020 – 2021 Strategic Plan (Year 2 of 5)

The Poughkeepsie City School School Board and District leaders have made a substantial investment into the future of Poughkeepsie City School District students through the development and implementation of a 5 year Strategic Plan.

Realizing that a plan serves as a “roadmap” for PCSD’s journey to reach its destination of transforming the school district, leaders monitor all aspects of the Strategic Plan and adjust our direction accordingly. Performance Objectives are categorized under four goals:

- **Student Achievement**
- **Resource Stewardship**
- **Internal Processes, Systems, & Structures**
- **Organizational Effectiveness**

Regular updates to the School Board and engaging all school stakeholders and critical partners are vital strategies are used to ensure success of each Goal and **96 Performance Objectives** for the 20-21 year.



Goal	Objective	Current Status	Target Date	Completion %	Notes
1.1	Increase the 4-year cohort graduation rates for ENL by	37%	35%	On-Track	• Staff development to help this staff in implementing strategies to increase graduation rates. • ENL staff, paraprofessionals, speech and language pathologists have been engaged to better and more accurately identify meaningful interventions. • The Chief of Elementary Education is creating a Teacher on Special Assignment position to support this program.
1.2	Increase the number of students proficient in ELA (Scoring 3 or 4) Grades 3 – 5 NY State Assessments for	27% (2019)	25%	On-Track	• The Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education has been regularly meeting with NYSED staff and PCSD building leadership to ensure that schools are meeting necessary student proficiency.
1.3	Increase the number of students proficient in Math (Scoring 3 or 4) Grades 3 – 5 NY State Assessments for	34% (2019)	29%	On-Track	• Second and implemented the major instructional resource as a tool for tracking student literacy and reading level. • Introduced new ELA curriculum to the Curriculum Committee. • Draft plan has been developed. Time in funding approval.
1.4	Establish a plan for the provision of greater supports for English Language Learner students using Commissioner Regulations Part 158 as guidance	-	Spring 2021	On-Track	• ENL staff, paraprofessionals, speech and language pathologists have been engaged to better and more accurately identify meaningful interventions. • TOSA position to be posted to this staff to support plan implementation.
2.1	By June 30, 2021, District receives an unqualified opinion for annual financial statements	Yes	-	Goal Achieved	• Audit findings and necessary recommendations were being sought.
2.2	Increase the % of general fund resources spent on instruction	N/A	2%	On-Track	• Work currently underway.
2.3	Ensure that Community School funding supports initiative	N/A	-	On-Track	• Monitoring occurring and spending is in line with community school budget.
2.4	Increase Employee Attendance by Data will be presented during quarterly updates by collective bargaining units and as one group	Data being compiled	5%	On-Track	• Many strategies are underway to address and improve staff attendance.
2.5	Develop school-based budgeting process	-	November 2020	On-Track	• In progress.
2.6	Develop a system for allocating financial resources to schools based on an equity model	-	November 2020	On-Track	• Analysis in district high cost programs and not of district allocations to further school programs that are most economically responsible.
3.1	Maintain openhouse rating for 'satisfaction' (grade school) (Principal Satisfaction)	-	90%	On Track	• Survey currently being finalized.
3.2	Maintain customer rating for grounds/10th (middle school) (Principal Satisfaction)	-	80%	On Track	
3.3	Successfully transition all central function departments to the Columbus Building	-	Summer 2020	Goal Achieved	
3.4	Successfully establish the BOE meetingspace at the Columbus Building	-	Fall 2020	On Track	• BOE staff where target completion date.
3.5	Successfully create a professional learning training space at the Columbus Building for all staff	-	Winter 2020	On Track	• BOE staff where target completion date.
3.6	Complete the telephone system upgrade project to provide school and community stakeholders with better access to communicate with district staff	-	Fall 2020	Goal Achieved	• Additional enhancements and upgrades are ongoing.
4.1	Conduct monthly leadership meetings with school-based leadership to enhance their effectiveness as leaders in the Poughkeepsie City School District	8	12	On Track	• Summer crisis implementation. • Monthly principal meetings are taking place. • Weekly communications and support has provided since the beginning of the school year.
4.2	Establish a Principal Advisory Committee - quarterly, and as needed meetings with Principals and Cabinet-level leaders to identify issues, problem solve, and receive feedback from Principals on key initiatives and central office supports	-	4	On-Track	• Monthly all administrator meetings are occurring. These meetings provide opportunity for principals, department heads, and cabinet members to identify issues, resolve problems, and discuss the interplay of central office and schools. • To date four (4) all administrators meetings have been held.
4.3	Launch a Capital Improvement Interim plan targeted to improve PCSO facilities and improve the learning environment	-	October 2020	Goal Achieved	
4.4	Ensure that all cabinet members have established goals and performance objectives aligned to the District's Annual Goals and Performance Objectives	-	100%	Goal Achieved	
4.5	Ensure that all cabinet members are annually evaluated	-	100%	On Track	• Superintendent meets weekly with cabinet members to discuss goals and progress toward achieving.

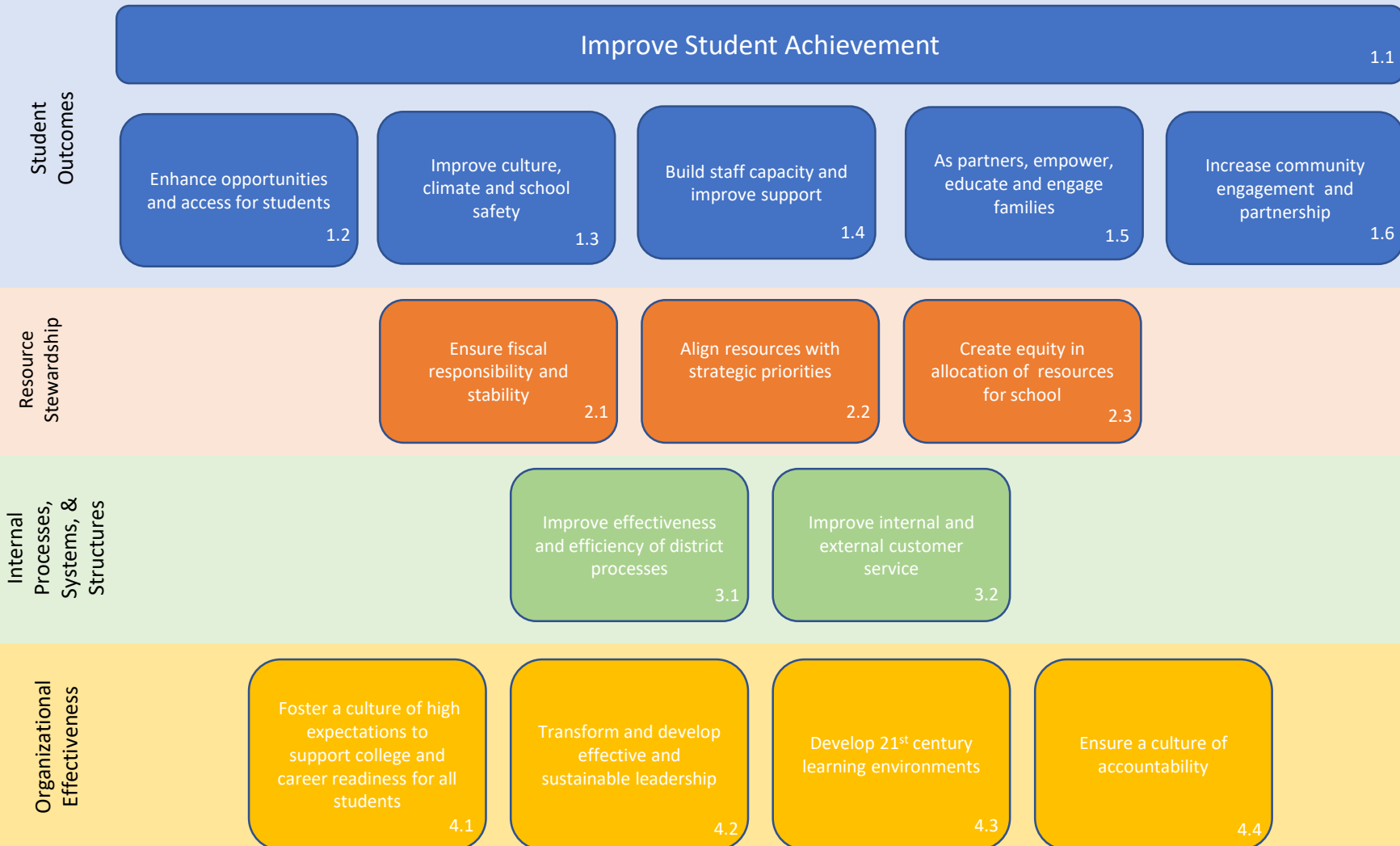




Poughkeepsie City School District

2020 – 2021 Strategy Map

Mission: We are champions of children who inspire and nurture the whole child by providing innovative, high quality educational opportunities that prepare all students to embark on individual paths of success in a globally diverse community.



Milestones – Student Achievement

Student Achievement

- ❖ Established all PCSD schools as Community Schools, which will benefit from a framework and funding to support student success through a model that strategically involves community.
- ❖ Identified a research-based K-8 ELA/Math curriculum to be implemented in 2021-2022.
- ❖ Morse Elementary School achieved 11 of 12 demonstrable improvement indicators (Receivership).
- ❖ A draft plan has been developed to support English Language Learners.
- ❖ Established Grade Level Expectations, Prek – 8 describing what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level (designed for parents).
- ❖ Developed a district-wide plan for bolstering literacy and foundational Math skills.
- ❖ Access to over 12,000 high quality digital books have been incorporated into the instructional program.
- ❖ Allocated funding to support full-time Librarians in every PCSD school.
- ❖ Expanded instructional resources to expand student learning outside of the school environment.
- ❖ Issued student learning devices (Chromebooks) to enhance student learning during the pandemic.
- ❖ Issued laptops to teachers to enhance student learning during the pandemic.

Enhanced Student Opportunities

- ❖ Established Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee.
- ❖ Designed and implemented a Saturday enrichment program (Saturday Morning Lights) for students K-12.
- ❖ Launching Youth Empowerment Summit (April 21, 2021).
- ❖ Developed local partnerships to provide PCSD students with virtual instructional opportunities.

Culture, Climate and School Safety

- ❖ The district has hired a U.S. Army Lieutenant to serve in the district's top safety role.
- ❖ Allocated funding to support full-time Social Workers to every PCSD school.
- ❖ Safety officers have been trained in student de-escalation strategies.
- ❖ A system to better secure PCSD buildings is currently being implemented.



Milestones – Student Achievement

Staff Capacity and Support

- ❖ Weekly professional development is provided to staff to support their capacity in meeting student need.
- ❖ Administrators undergo monthly professional development to build their instructional, organizational, and operational leadership skills.
- ❖ Teacher Resource Center established, opened, and resourced.

Parent Empowerment, Educational, and Engagement

- ❖ Parent Empowerment Center established, opened, and resourced.
- ❖ Free workshops for parents offered through the Parent Empowerment Academy.
- ❖ 3 -Year Parent and Community Engaged Plan developed.
- ❖ Three dynamic District Family Advocates hired to support parent needs.
- ❖ Two highly informative Family Guides created to support parent understanding of PCSD Reopening.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

- ❖ Co-founded the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet with Mayor Rolison
- ❖ Created a space for community organizations to be an equal partner in student and family success.
- ❖ Strengthened PCSD's relationships with:
 - ✓ Teachers/Principals
 - ✓ Taxpayers
 - ✓ Community-based Organizations
 - ✓ Business Community
 - ✓ Foundations and Philanthropic Community
 - ✓ Higher Education
 - ✓ Strategic Partners
 - ✓ City Government
 - ✓ County Government
 - ✓ Hudson Valley Legislative Delegation
 - ✓ New York State Department of Education



Milestones – Resource Stewardship

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability

- ❖ PCSD's financial outlook has improved significantly in one year, providing greater capacity to grow student program and supports, and stabilize district finances.
- ❖ Corrected an multimillion dollar budget challenge greatly contributed to PCSD long standing structural deficit.
- ❖ Significantly cut overtime cost without disrupting work toward operational goals.
- ❖ Board of Education has re-established the Audit Committee.
- ❖ Significant Improvements were noted in the 2020 year-end financial audit.
- ❖ A balanced 21-22 budget will be presented to the BOE on April 7, 2021 for adoption.
- ❖ Executing a plan that will settle all collective bargaining unit contracts by year ending 2023.
- ❖ Developing a comprehensive 4-year financial plan focused on cost savings, cost avoidance, and revenue generation designed to eliminate the potential of any future structural deficits.

Align Resources to Strategic Priorities

- ❖ Shift in spending is resulting in more funding supporting student programming and supports.
- ❖ Aligned state funding to support Community School Initiative.
- ❖ District has made application to over \$5 million dollars in grant funding to support growth and expansion of district strategic priorities.

Create Equity in Allocation of Resources to Schools

- ❖ PCSD instituted and is utilizing a school-based budgeting process for the 21-22 academic year.
- ❖ Factors such as enrollment, academic and social emotional needs, and NYSED designation are being factored into an equity model for the allocation of resources to each school for the 21-22 academic year.



Milestones – Internal Processes, Systems, & Structures

Improve Effectiveness and Efficiency of District Processes

- ❖ Board of Education is reviewing and updating all Board Policies.
- ❖ Board of Education continues to improve its functionality.
- ❖ Each Department Head is reviewing operational systems and updating procedures and utilizing technology innovations to replace antiquated systems.

Improve Internal and External Customer Service

- ❖ An emphasis on impeccable internal and external communication is key to the success of the organization is being articulated and supported from the top down.
- ❖ One hundred and twenty-five weekly communications (Superintendent's Briefs) have been published and distributed to more than 1,500 people weekly since September 2019.
- ❖ Over 70 Principal Fireside Chats have been held since September 2020.
- ❖ Senior staff and the superintendent are engaging community stakeholders in conversations connecting the work of the Poughkeepsie City School District to broader interconnected community-based work.
- ❖ A complete telephone system upgrade has been completed to replace a system that would intermittently be inoperable.
- ❖ The district website has been revamped to provide more information and accessibility to school and community stakeholders.



Milestones – Organizational Effectiveness

Foster a Culture of High Expectations to Support College and Career Readiness for all Students

- ❖ Currently collecting public feedback to develop instructional program pathways aligned to emerging industry and occupational fields in the Hudson Valley.
- ❖ Created a virtual college tour representing 164 colleges and universities.
- ❖ Working with community-based organizations to expand student college and career exploration.
- ❖ Planning is currently underway to build a School to Work program as part of PCSD 21-22 Performance Objectives.

Transform and Develop Effective and Sustainable Leadership

- ❖ The framework for an Aspiring Leadership Academy for teachers and administrators to maximize their leadership potential has been developed.
- ❖ Administrators undergo monthly professional development to build their instructional, organizational, and operational leadership skills.

Develop 21st Century Learning Environments

- ❖ Gained approval and launched a \$100 million Capital Improvement Project.
- ❖ A Energy Performance Project will launch in 2021-2022.
- ❖ A plan to upgrade student furniture will launch 2021-2022.
- ❖ PCSD obtained approval to spend \$2.3 million in classroom technology upgrades.

Ensure a Culture of Accountability

- ❖ Established an accountability system that evaluates the academic, operational, and fiscal performance of the school district.
- ❖ Established an accountability system that evaluates staff performance annually.



Next Steps – What is on PCSD's horizon?



Next Steps – Conditions for Success

- **District**

- Maintaining Focus on Strategic Goals and Direction
- Growing Effective and Sustainable Leadership
- Being Transparent
- Strengthening Communication
- Building Alliances and Partnerships

- **Schools**

- Supporting the needs of the Whole child (Academic and Social Emotional)
 - PreK – 12 grade instructional programming connected to:
 - Foundational knowledge and skills acquisition
 - Collegiate opportunities
 - Emerging industry and occupational fields in the Hudson Valley
 - Social and Emotional supports and programming that:
 - Supports positive youth development
 - Stresses student leadership and responsibility
- Supporting Effective Instruction
- Developing Strong Partnerships and Collaboration among parents and the community





On Behalf of
all PCSD
students
Thank You!

