



# MY BROTHER'S KEEPER COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Port Chester-Rye  
Union Free School District



**A MESSAGE FROM LUIS A. MARINO,  
MAYOR OF THE VILLAGE OF PORT CHESTER**

*The Village of Port Chester is fully committed to supporting the My Brother's Keeper initiative. We are committed to meeting our male scholars' needs and promoting academic excellence and college and career readiness. We have a vested interest in supporting their mental health and helping them build upon their emotional intelligence. As a result, we welcome the opportunity to officially be a part of the New York State My Brother's Keeper Community Network. Our district's commitment to the MBK initiative is fully enshrined in the belief that we must support our young men of color. We recognize the challenges faced by these young people. The Village of Port Chester supports the six national MBK milestones that focus on ensuring that all children:*

*1. Enter school ready to learn 2. Read at grade level by third grade 3. Graduate from high school ready for college and career 4. Complete postsecondary education or training 5. Successfully enter the workforce 6. Grow up in safe communities and get a second chance if they make a mistake. In addition to supporting the six milestones set at the national level, we are also committed to supporting the six NYS goals. MBK goals: 1. Ensuring equitable access to high quality schools and programs 2. Expanding prevention, early warning, and intervention services 3. Using differentiated approaches based on need and culture 4. Responding to structural and institutional racism 5. Making comprehensive and coordinated support services widely available 6. Engaging families and communities in a trusted and respectful way we are proud to stand beside the New York State Education Department as an active member of the New York State My Brother's Keeper Community Network to further these goals.*

*Sincerely,*

*Luis A. Marino Mayor of the Village of Port Chester*

222 Grace Church Street, Port Chester, NY 10573

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***“They see what ought to be by the reflection of what is, and endeavor to remove the contradiction.” – Frederick Douglas***



### **Message from the Superintendent: Dr. Aurelia Henriquez**

*As the Superintendent of Schools, I aim to address an essential topic that lies at the heart of our educational journey: collective will. It is an honor to participate in this critical work in the context of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative and its impact on the Port Chester School District.*

*The MBK initiative inspires us to take a collective approach towards supporting and empowering our students, particularly those who face significant challenges. It calls upon us to break down barriers and create opportunities for every single student in our district, regardless of their circumstances. It challenges us to be accountable for the success of each and every student, especially those who need our support the most.*

*In embracing the collective will, we recognize that the success of our students is not solely the responsibility of teachers and administrators. It is a responsibility shared by every member of our community. From parents and guardians to community leaders, local organizations, and volunteers, we all play a crucial role in shaping the future of our students.*

*We must come together to remove the barriers that hinder the progress of our students. Whether those barriers are rooted in socio-economic challenges, language barriers, or limited access to resources, we cannot allow them to define the destiny of our children. It is our collective will that empowers us to overcome these obstacles, ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed.*

*Creating opportunities for our students means providing them with a supportive and inclusive learning environment. It means fostering a culture that celebrates diversity, embraces inclusivity, and promotes A SENSE OF BELONGING. It means investing in programs and initiatives that address the unique needs of our students, including mentorship, after-school activities, and access to technology.*

*Let us remember that our vision and mission as a school district cannot be fulfilled unless we commit ourselves to the success of all our students. Each student is a valuable member of our community, deserving of our unwavering support and dedication.*

*The Port Chester School District has accepted the MBK Challenge. At our MBK Summit we accepted responsibility and said yes to collective will. I call upon every single member of our*

*community to join hands and be accountable for the success of every student in our district. Let us be the collective force that uplifts and inspires. Let us be the champions of our students' dreams, guiding them towards a future filled with endless possibilities.*

*Together, we have the power to transform lives, to break cycles of inequality, and to create a brighter future for our students. Let us unite our collective will, remove barriers, and create opportunities so that we may fulfill our vision and mission of success for all.*

*Thank you and let us embark on this journey of collective will, knowing that together, we can make a difference in the lives of our students and in the future of our community.*







## **A Message from the Director of Guidance:**

### **Dr. Maeva Rich Kennedy**

*Our students are the future leaders, innovators and change makers of society. Investing in their support and mentorship not only helps them develop essential skills and knowledge but also cultivates a strong sense of community engagement and empowerment. The My Brother's Keeper initiative (MBK) solidifies our values as a community; recognizing the imperative role education plays in shaping a brighter future for our students, particularly our students of color.*

*Rooted in mentorship, support, and equitable opportunities, MBK serves as a catalyst for empowerment, striving to dismantle barriers, while cultivating an inclusive environment, where every student can thrive- in short, SUCCESS FOR ALL! My Brother's Keeper, however, is more than an initiative; its significance lies not just within the name but the transformation it ignites, nurturing a community where every student's potential is acknowledged and celebrated.*

*Our district pledges a commitment to prioritize identified milestones and priorities critical in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Through this work, we aim to create community cohesion through a universal framework in which all students feel valued and supported. By investing in our students, through these pillars, we are providing empowerment, socially and academically. Further MBK aims to provide access to resources to those that may face socio-economic and racial disparities.*

*Our hope is to ignite a powerful conversation in which critical dialogue is required amongst our elected officials, community leaders, parents, and faith-based leaders to create and implement a purposeful plan to impart meaningful change for our young people. Becoming a New York State Education recognized participant in the MBK Community allows us to join a greater network of stakeholders aligned in a call to action to improve outcomes for our students.*

*It is in our collective efforts, together as a community, that we embark on a journey that will shape brighter, more promising futures for all. Our journey continues; and together, we will make a lasting impact for our youth ensuring pathways to their success and general well-being.*



April 3, 2024

To the Port Chester Community:

I write to express the Port Chester Carver Center's commitment to the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative accepted by the Port Chester School District and the Village of Port Chester. We look forward to becoming an integral part of the New York State My Brother's Keeper Community Network.

At Carver Center, we support the holistic development of our male scholars, with a focus on promoting academic excellence, college and career readiness, and mental health and emotional intelligence. We firmly believe that every young man of color deserves equitable opportunities and unwavering support to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Aligned with the six national MBK milestones, we are dedicated to ensuring that all children:

1. Enter school ready to learn:
2. Read at grade level by third grade
3. Graduate from high school ready for college and career
4. Complete postsecondary education or training
5. Successfully enter the workforce
6. Grow up in safe communities and get a second chance if they make a mistake

In addition to our commitment to these national milestones, we are fully committed to providing robust programming and supported services to enhance the quality of life and positive outcomes of our male youth and young adults. These include:

1. A robust and comprehensive school-age after-school program to support academic growth and personal development.
2. College and Career Guidance and support services outside of school hours to explore various postsecondary education pathways.
3. A safe and welcoming center that extends support not only to the youth but also to their families, recognizing the importance of holistic support systems.

We are proud to be aligned with the Port Chester School District, Village of Port Chester, and New York State Education Department as members of the New York State My Brother's Keeper Community Network. We are committed to furthering the goals of the MBK initiative, fostering inclusive communities, and empowering our young men of color to achieve their full potential.

Sincerely,

Anne Bradner  
Chief Executive Officer  
Port Chester Carver Center

## **Introduction:**

The Village of Port Chester is specified as the Westchester County Community with the largest per capita Latinx population. More than 65% of the residents identify as Latino and more than 80% of the students who attend the Port Chester Rye Union Free School District are Latino/Hispanic.

Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District (PCRUFSD) includes six district schools that serve a population of 4,455 K-12 students, residing in Westchester County, New York. Within the district's boundaries, a parochial school serves parentally placed students. The following demographic information and data points outlined in this section are related to PCRUFSD only. PCRUFSD is in the New York City metropolitan statistical area, with a total village population of 30,823 residents (US Census, 2022). Historically, our students have faced a disproportionate level of trauma and hardship in their communities due to poverty, high concentrations of crime, language/cultural barriers, and limited access to health and human services. Together, these barriers have negatively impacted our students' collective well-being and impeded their ability to focus on school. As a result of the challenges in our surrounding community, our district has been identified as a “high need” LEA in the State of New York.

Specifically, the Port Chester-Rye UFSD educates approximately 4,500 students in six district schools, including four elementary schools (K-5), a middle school (6-8), and a single high school (9-12). The district enrollment, as stated above, is predominantly Hispanic (60%) and African American/Black (37%) students, who comprised 97% of district enrollment in 2018-19. More than three quarters of students are considered economically disadvantaged (77%), and nearly 40% of our students are English Language Learners

Most recently, our community has been grappling with a higher frequency and propensity of violence, possible gang-related recruitment activity, and higher poverty levels. More qualitatively, student behavior incidents are also on the rise, with consistent reports from building administrators about student behaviors leading to detentions and suspensions. Substance use, particularly vaping in our campus restrooms, is a prevalent issue across our community.

An analysis of crime within the Village of Port Chester provided by the Port Chester Police Department has revealed an uptick in altercations, threatening behaviors, and crimes committed by students in our community. In the 2022-23 school year, the Village of Port Chester Police Department reported several incidents that evidence the rising behavioral infractions, which impact our student's sense of safety and well-being on our campuses:

- Several threats to inflict bodily harm were made on K-12 campuses and via social media during the school year
- A BB gun and imitation pistol were recovered from students on two of our campuses

- Several students posted videos on social media of themselves committing larcenies in local shopping stores, committing acts of vandalism, and making threats to others.
- A student was apprehended distributing edibles on campus, and several students had adverse reactions.

### **Our Vision and Mission**

***“In order to serve its purpose, a vision has to be a shared vision.” -Warren G. Bennis***

*The VISION of the Port Chester School District is SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT. This vision has been internalized by every teacher, administrator and staff member who work tirelessly every day to ensure student success. The educational programs and services offered to our students reflect a quest for scholastic excellence, combined with respect and concern for the worth and development of individual students.*

*The MISSION of the Port Chester School District, through an active partnership among community, parents, staff and students, is to develop responsible and self-sufficient citizens who value cultural diversity, are creative and adaptable, and possess the self-esteem, motivation and skills to continue individual growth, think critically, and communicate effectively.*

### **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.)**

*Based on the District/Community SWOT Analysis feedback, we answered the following questions:*

• **What are the internal strengths and weaknesses of the Port Chester School District?**

*We collectively believe that our diversity is our greatest strength. A historical weakness has been that we can work harder to improve communication and connectedness.*

• **What are the external opportunities and threats in our district and its environment?**

*Our diversity also serves as an opportunity for our community to lead the way for others in terms of addressing the complexities associated with our community. A threat is reluctance to change .*

• **Can any weaknesses be converted to strengths? Any threats to opportunities?**

*Our weaknesses and threats have allowed us to focus, as a district and community, on the following goals. Our goals also allow us to take advantage of our strengths and opportunities:*

*Goal 1- Increase Student Outcomes Through Multiple Pathways and A Data Informed Culture*



- *Utilize data, research, experience, and collaboration to inform instruction and strategic planning.*
- *Openly share data, discussions, and goals to improve academic rigor and performance Pre-K-12.*
- *Create a culture of student agency, where all students are exposed to multiple college and career opportunities.*

*Goal 2- Improve Communication and Community Engagement By Fostering A Sense of Empathy, Community Connectedness, and Pride in Ram Nation*

- *Utilize multiple platforms and outlets to broadcast important information while publicly celebrating and highlighting our students, staff, and district's accomplishments.*
- *Collaborate and be inclusive more often to allow for meaningful discourse with key stakeholders and community partners to increase community engagement and a sense of pride in our "Ramilly"/Ram Nation.*
- *Ensure that students, families, and district staff engage in meaningful and authentic interactions with a focus on mindfulness and mental health supports.*

*Goal 3- Engage in Strategic Planning for Fiscal Responsibilities and Facilities*

- *Collaborate for strategic planning to safeguard fiscal stability.*
- *Take a proactive approach to improve and maintain safe schools and well-maintained facilities and grounds that our community can be proud of.*
- *Review of facilities, budget, and operations for long-term planning purposes.*

**• What strategic changes can your district implement as a result of the SWOT analysis?**

- *Developing a strategic plan based on the above has allowed us to uphold the principles of My Brother's Keeper, through a closer look and the details of how we will accomplish our shared vision, mission, and goals. Please see our Strategic Plan attached/below.*

**• External Challenges**

- *We recognize potential external challenges lie within the commitment required from our community partners to create, develop and support opportunities for the advancement and success of our young people. We also recognize that variables impacting our young people outside of the school, in their own home environment, may present as a significant external challenge. Finally, we recognize the external challenge that resources; including human capital and funding sources may present in our journey.*

**The Call To Action:**

While serving a beautifully diverse community, we also serve significant populations of students who have been historically underserved:

- 39% of students are English Language Learners
- 85% of students are Hispanic/Latino
- 3% of students are individuals of color (other than Hispanic)
- 16.7% of students have IEPs (Individualized Education Program)
- 1.5% of students are experiencing homelessness

Additionally, our district's needs are significant and far surpass New York State's "high need" threshold:

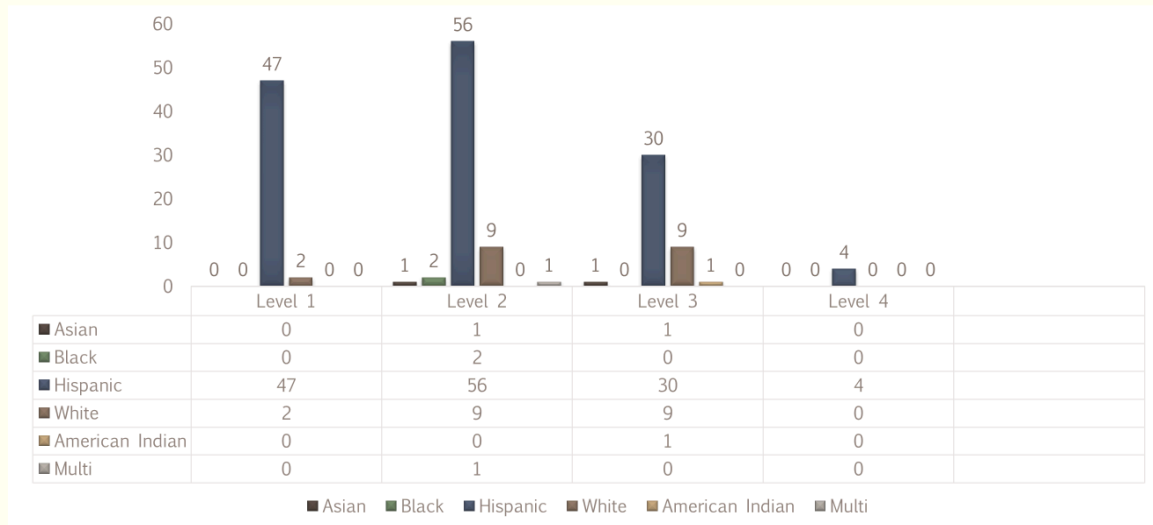
- 28.4% of our students experience chronic absences
- 73.45% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared to 56% at the state level



Aside from these metrics, our students struggle to perform in school at the level of their peers, largely due to the challenges they face in their daily lives. As a result, our district was designated as a Targeted District for Improvement by the NYS Education Department for the past four years. Based on data from the 2022-2023 school year:

- PCRUFSD has an overall 4% dropout rate, with our ELL dropout rate increasing from 14% to 30% over the past 5 years
- In grades 3-8, 31% of our students are proficient in ELA, in comparison to the state average of 47%
- In grades 3-8, 25% of our students are proficient in Math, in comparison to the state average of 41%

## 2022-2023 Grade 3 ELA Performance of Male Students



We understand that a stable, positive school environment, where students and families feel safe, supported, and engaged is vital for student well-being and success. As a district, we have already made considerable strides towards a more comprehensive approach to addressing the holistic needs of our students. Some key efforts include:

- Collaborations with Family Services of Westchester, a mental health community-based organization to provide clinical mental health services during the school day to identified students
- Increased staff to include four, full-time, NYS Certified School Social Workers to engage as School Community Coordinators; charged to implement the community schools' approach; supporting students and families
- Implementing Rams Rising, a program designed to enhance students' connection to our school community by fostering trusting relationships with caring adult mentors.
- Providing an alternative school program (Principal's Prep Academy) that supports graduation opportunities for students coping with grief, trauma, anxiety, and depression.

However, the needs of our students are immense, and our district must take additional measures to **proactively** support student wellbeing in the form of prevention. As we have assessed community needs over the past decade, we have seen a steady rise in students exposed to trauma

and adverse childhood experiences. Several key findings obtained from our 2022-23 district-level data and the July 2023 BOCES needs assessment report highlight this urgent need:

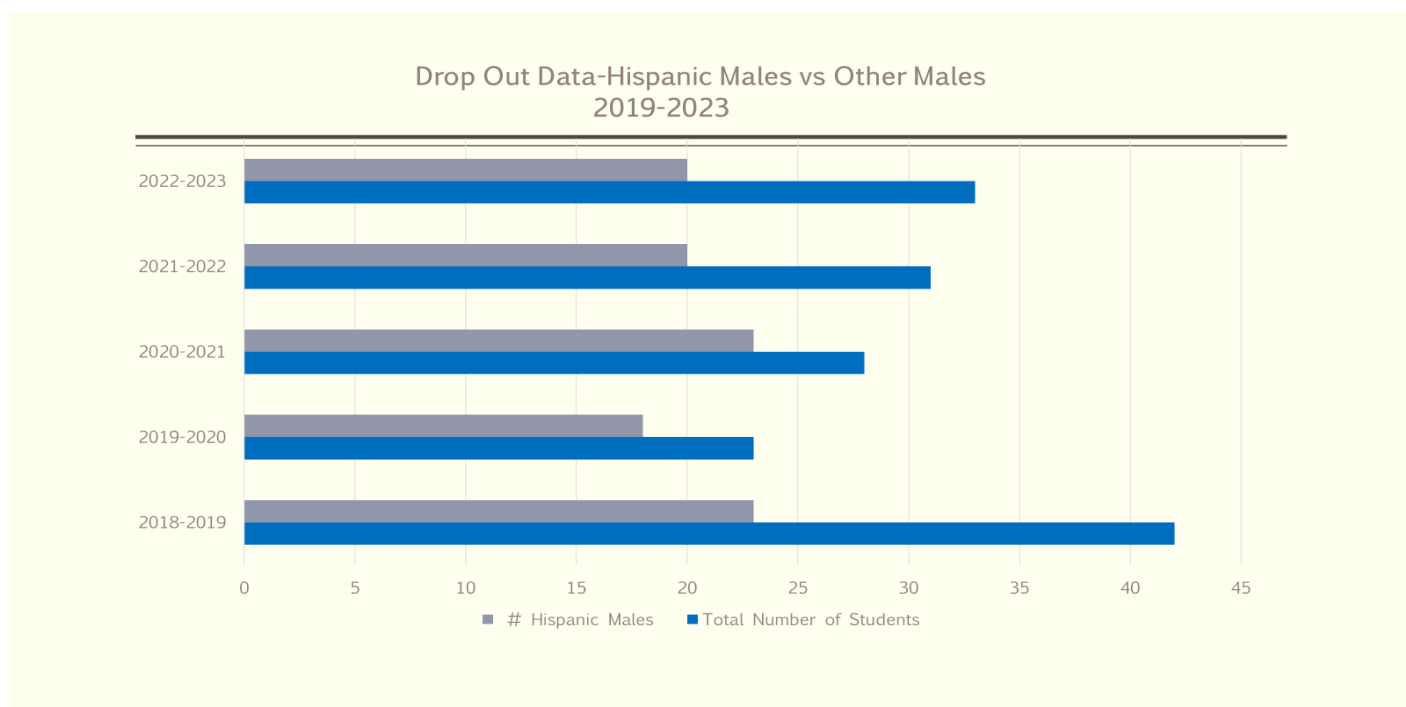
**Insufficient Social Emotional Supports for Students:**

- Only 43% of middle school faculty agreed that the school provides the resources, and training necessary to support students' social or emotional needs and 55% reported that the school adequately supports students with their social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Additionally, only 50% of middle school families felt that the school supports parents in identifying the social and emotional skills their children need to develop. Lastly, as a district, we have seen an 80% increase in elementary school students referred to mandated counseling services for behaviors that impact their daily functioning and school success.



**Low Sense of Connectedness to School:**

- 64% of middle school students indicated that they feel like they belong at their school, and 65% reported that they are happy to be at their school. Only 41% of students agreed that students talk about the importance of understanding their own feelings and the feelings of others. Additionally, 71% of families agreed that they feel welcome at the school.
- According to our most recent data, the Port Chester High School dropout rate for Hispanic/Latino male students is significantly higher.



### **Behaviors That Negatively Impact Student Safety and Wellbeing:**

- Nearly 60% of staff members agreed that alcohol use is a major problem among students, and over 52% indicated that drug use is also prevalent.
- Additionally, 34% of staff members indicated that bullying is a problem among students, and nearly 27% agreed that physical altercations occur often.

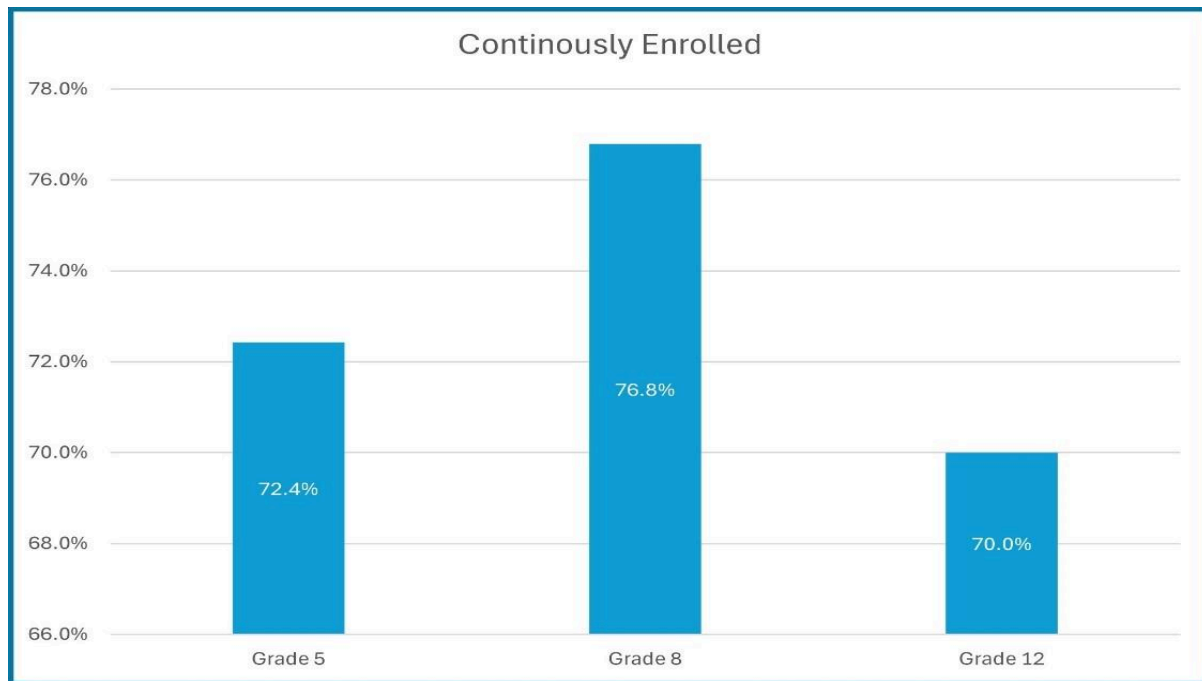
### **Low Levels of Engagement in School:**



- Chronic absenteeism is on the rise in our district. Attendance data from the 2018-2019 school year finds student absenteeism recorded at 14%, compared to the most recent 2022-2023 school year data indicating a significant elevation to 28%.

### **High Levels of Student Mobility**

- More than 40% of students who graduate from Port Chester High School have experienced interruptions in their education due to mobility.
- 38% of current fifth grade students have not been continuously enrolled in the same school since kindergarten.



### **The Port Chester School District and Community Focused MBK Principles: My Brother's Keeper is focused on six national milestones:**

1. Getting a Healthy Start and Entering School Ready to Learn
2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade
3. Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career
4. Completing Post-Secondary Education or Training
5. Successfully Entering the Workforce Through Increased Engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEAM)
6. Successful Development of Social Emotional Competencies

**In addition to these milestones, NYS MBK priorities include:**

1. Ensuring equitable access to high quality schools and programs;
2. Expanding prevention, early warning, and intervention services;
3. Using differentiated approaches based on need and culture;
4. Responding to structural and institutional racism;
5. Making comprehensive and coordinated support services widely available; and
6. Engaging families and communities in a trusted and respectful way.

The above highlighted milestones and commitments represent the work that the Port Chester School District will focus on through our commitment to this initiative. These areas were selected by members of our community, including students, through a data dive that revealed challenges with reading proficiency by third grade, statistics regarding dropouts and our commitment to community engagement.



## Community Support

On December 11, 2023, the Port Chester school district recently made history by hosting the My Brother's Keeper Summit, an event aimed at addressing the challenges faced by boys of color in education. The summit brought together various members of the Port Chester Community, including teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, mental health professionals, staff,

parents, the Board of Education President and Trustees, Port Chester Village Trustees, Mayor Luis Marino, Senator Shelley Mayer, Assemblyman Steve Otis, local police, our School Resource Officers, Director of Guidance Dr.



Maeva Rich Kennedy, Superintendent Dr. Aurelia Henriquez and most importantly, our students.

The summit focused on the need to improve the academic performance of black and brown male students, who, according to both NY State assessment data and internal data, have been underperforming on the New York State ELA assessment, particularly in third grade.

Additionally, boys of color have had higher rates of suspensions and dropouts.

In response to these challenges, the community made a commitment to take an "all hands-on deck" approach to address the issues faced by boys of color in the Port Chester school district. There was a collective acknowledgment that the current situation is unacceptable, and a determination to improve the trajectory and outcomes for our students. The summit was recorded and made available on our website, ensuring that the discussions and action steps taken are widely accessible. Port Chester Schools MBK Local Action Summit Community Partner Committee meetings held on November 13, 2023, and January 23, 2024, provided an opportunity to engage with various stakeholders and discuss the data and the MBK Action Plan. On January 10, 2024, the challenges surrounding reading proficiency levels were specifically discussed and addressed through input from our Superintendent Advisory Group consisting of high school students. Port Chester Schools MBK Local Action Summit Through this collaborative effort, the Port Chester school district aims to create an inclusive and excellent educational environment for all students, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for boys of color. By recognizing the collective will to do better by our children, the community is committed to improving the collective future of Port Chester.



## **Community Action Plan**

### **Reading at Grade Level By Third Grade**

Port Chester is committed to building a district-wide culture of inquiry and data study K-12, with a strong focus on outcomes, targets, and achievement that supports the whole child, whole school, whole community philosophy and approach. Students in need of academic and/or behavior intervention services will be referred by their general education teachers or parents to their respective Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) / Response to Intervention (RTI) teams for prompt consideration and development of required plan for services. Students with RTI/MTSS plans will be monitored closely for progress and revisions of their plans as delineated in the District's RTI/MTSS Plan. Further and highlighting an emphasis on literacy, Port Chester has adopted and began implementation of a new literacy program; American Reading Company (ARC). The goals established through use of the ARC program are for all students who have entered Kindergarten in Port Chester Schools by 2022 and who have remained in our schools through grade 3, will achieve grade level literacy by the end of Grade 3.

### **Graduating High School Ready for College and Careers**

Port Chester Schools aims to create a culture of student agency, where ALL students are exposed to multiple college and career opportunities across grade levels Pre-K-12. Our school counselors have been engaged in year long professional development to grow our college and career preparation through increased-push-in lessons, increased parent informational workshops and increased graduation pathways for students to engage in college or career goals. Port Chester has created partnerships with local colleges and universities, including Westchester Community College (WCC), and Purchase College to support students' direct access to college. Specifically, Port Chester has an "Instant Admissions" program in which graduating seniors, upon consent from students and parents, are automatically enrolled in their Freshman year at WCC. Further, to promote students' career pathways into the world of education in particular, Port Chester is in the process of creating a "Grow Your Own" program. "Grow Your Own" will ideally provide students with aspirations of career pathways into educational career opportunities to take classes at the High School that will provide a trajectory into teaching or other school providers like counselors, school psychologists or service providers. Another platform for exposure and access to college and career is through our college and career fairs. Port Chester High School will commence its second annual College and Career Fair in which trades and vocation will be featured in addition to college programs. This year's fair will host workshops facilitated by local



community members who will speak about their career trajectory, pathways, and experiences. Port Chester Middle School will also hold their own college and career fair to support exposure and access to the middle school community and their families.

### **Expanding Prevention, Early Warning, and Intervention Services**

As previously mentioned, Port Chester Schools utilizes MTSS for students identified in need of academic or behavioral intervention services. Currently, we are examining our academic support to ensure expansion of academic intervention services to meet the needs of identified students. One program that Port Chester Schools has created is an alternative learning environment within the high school for students who have been identified with emotional regulation difficulties in which their academic success and performance have been compromised. Through the Principal's Promise Academy (PPA) students receive personalized instruction, differentiated scheduling, and engage in college and career readiness activities. PPA students also have an assigned counselor that supports their needs during their time in PPA.



A peer-mentorship program known as Rams Rising was initiated this year to support middle school students at the middle school. Like PPA, a small group of students (approximately 15-20) will be supported, to fulfill their potential. Like the My Brother's Keeper initiative, we aim to begin to address persistent opportunity gaps. We also aim to become part of the My Brothers Keeper community through our work with Rams Rising. SEL, inclusivity, and mental health are at the core of this. The Guidance Director and counselors, and others will also be working with our Rams during the day.



## Engaging Families and Communities in a Trusted and Respectful Way

Port Chester Schools continue to create opportunities for all students, teachers, leaders, staff, parents, and members of the community to feel included, respected, and well-informed. We see our diversity as a strength, and we are engaging stakeholders in conversations about inclusive excellence and equitable access in all programs, practices, and initiatives. This commitment fits into the district's vision of *Success for All Students*. When all students are supported, have access to various programs and learning opportunities it ensures that they will be successful in their academic and social development. Therefore, it is an important priority to pursue as it is in our students' best interest.

**Action Plans-** Utilize multiple platforms and outlets to broadcast important information to celebrate and highlight the district's success stories. We will collaborate and be inclusive more often to allow for meaningful discourse with key stakeholders. We will include opportunity for student voice and celebrate publicly our students' and staff's accomplishments. Ensure access to translation devices at all Board of Education Meetings. Use Covey's Speed of Trust and 13 Habits of High Trust Leaders to guide relationships. Ongoing collaborative conversations with elected officials. Opportunities for student voice. Implement a robust school climate survey system for staff, students, and families beginning in September 2023 with a participation rate of at least 50% for constituencies throughout the school year.

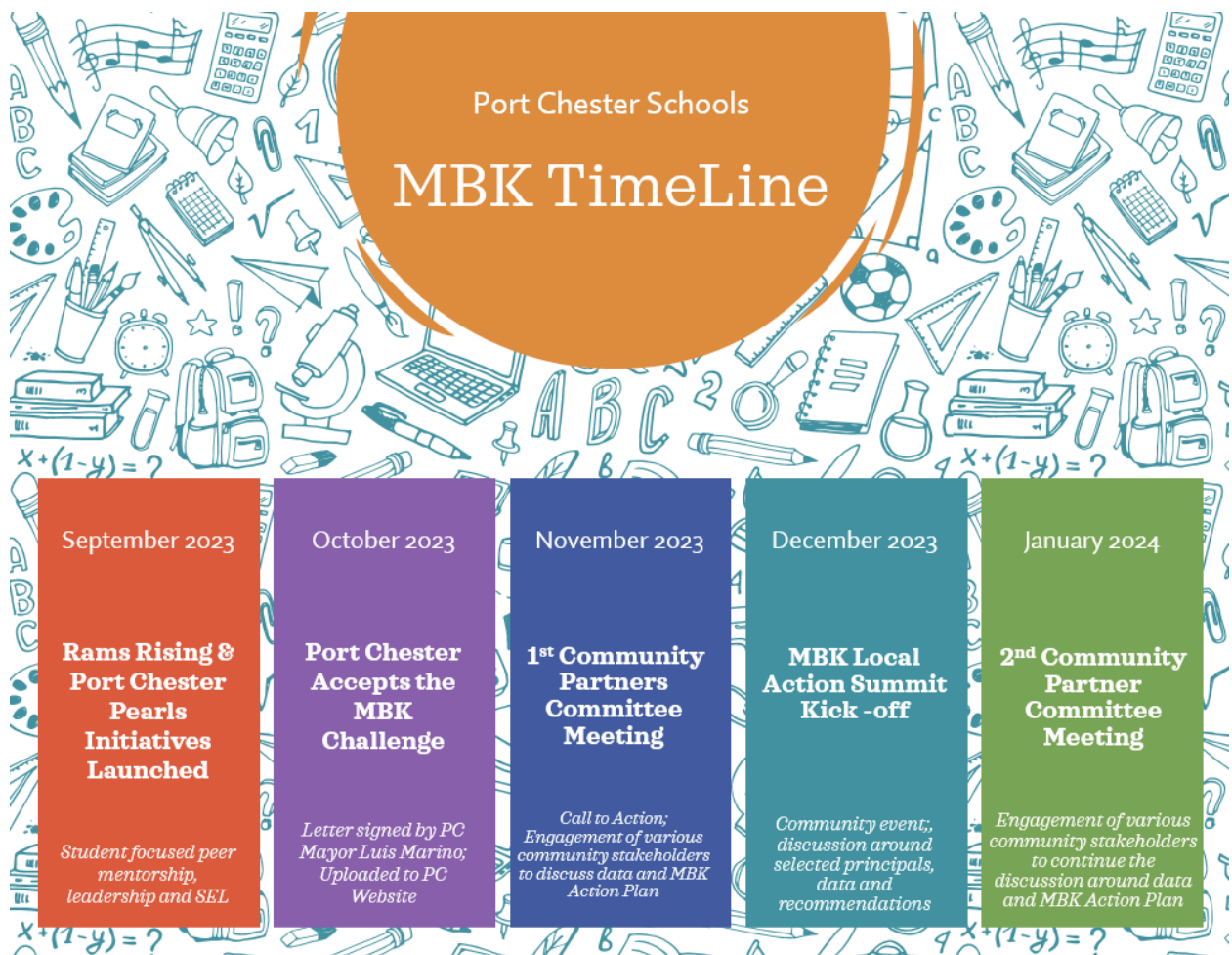
What does success look like? Building a culture of collaboration and trust is the necessary foundation for inclusive excellence. Based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered, the need for consistency and collaboration across schools has emerged as a priority. Lack of collaboration and consistency in the past has led to disconnected and isolated decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and programmatic decisions that were not supported by data. One of the goals of the Board of Education for the 2021-2022 year is: Foster A Sense of Community Connectedness. In the same way that the Board and District aim to ensure that students, families, and district staff engage in meaningful and authentic interactions and to forge and sustain community partnerships to expand opportunities for students, a collaborative environment, which emphasizes shared ownership, is key, at all schools.



Build protocols for talking and engaging in aligned conversations. Strengthen the connection between our UPK and our Elementary schools. School and district leaders and K-12 faculty will participate in professional learning that is tailored to their need All students participate in district initiatives that build a sense of connection and pride through multiple district-wide

Initiatives (K-12)- World Kindness Day, Ram Nation Pride Day, MLK Interfaith Celebration, Special Education Gala/Parent Engagement, STEAM Fest, etc. District-wide after school and summer school that partner with community organizations.

# MBK TIMELINES



Port Chester Schools

# MBK TimeLine Ongoing

January 2024

**Superintendent's  
Student Advisory  
Group**

*Panel of PCHS students  
discuss challenges around  
reading proficiency levels,  
school climate and culture*

January 2024

**Port Chester  
Commemorates  
Black History  
Month**

**Dr. Martin Luther  
King, Jr Celebration  
Video**

*Unified celebration of  
school and community*

February 2024

**Port Chester  
Pearls Session**

*Student centered forum  
around SEL,  
confidence, leadership*

Ongoing  
2023-2024

**TSG  
Disproportionality  
Committee**

*Year long examination of  
discipline data from  
2021-2024*

May 2024

**PC College and  
Career Fair**

*Providing access and  
exposure to college  
campuses and career  
pathways*

## **Port Chester My Brother's Keeper Community Partners and Committee**

Dr. Aurelia Henriquez, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Maeva Rich Kennedy, Director of Guidance

Luis Marino, Port Chester Mayor

NAACP – Tom Kissner and Fred Griffin

Don Bosco – Jerry Rodriguez

Family Services of Westchester – Lupita DeLuccia

Family Services of Westchester – Karen Fink

Open Door – Sara Hodgdon— Karen Mandel

Tamarack Tower – Denise Quinn

Carver Center – Anne Bradner

Carver Center – Daniel Bonnet

Port Chester Council for the Arts –Denise Colangelo

One World/Aspire – Joe Carvin

Steer – Derek Vincent

Steer- Montserrat Cardenas

Charles Morgan – PC Youth Bureau Director –

Feeding Westchester – Jandery DeLaCruz-

Westchester Mobile Mental Health – Beth Glauber Ahern

Phil Oldham – Larchmont/Mamaroneck Lions Club

Jackie Lopez – Prolific Hoops

MOMS/Meals on Main – Denise Cypher

MOMS/Meals on Main – Bill Cusano

Nicole Barros – Bilingual Survivor Response Program Coordinator/WestCOP-Victims Assistance Services

Helping Hands for the Homeless and Hungry – Young Kim

Joan Grangenois-Thomas Port Chester Village Board

Phil Dorazio – Port Chester Village Board

Religious/Faith Leaders

Ingraham Taylor- NAACP ACT-SO

Chris McGregor-Feeding Westchester

BHFP - Blue Heart Forever Project; Lynda De Gomez - Director



## Port Chester School District Strategic Plan 2024-2025

**R.A.M.S.**  
Rigorous and Equitable  
Academic Experiences +  
Mental/Emotional Health Supports=  
Success for All Types of Learners

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Port Chester School District, through an active partnership among community, parents, staff, and students, is to develop responsible and self-sufficient citizens who value cultural diversity, are creative and adaptable, and possess the self-esteem, motivation and skills to continue individual growth, think critically, and communicate effectively.

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<b>Superintendent-</b> Dr. Aurelia L. Henriquez	<b>Board of Education-</b> Chrissie Onofrio, President Roberto Dominguez, Vice President Sharon Burke George Ford Joanne Ferrara
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### WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

Strategic planning is something most districts do on a regular basis. It is an opportunity for a district to collaborate, reflect and plan. Since July 2021, we have been engaged in the preliminary stages of this planning. Through a district wide SWOT analysis, stakeholder group meetings, leadership and faculty and staff input, we asked ourselves several main questions:

**How are things going in our district right now?**  
**What are our strengths, challenges, and opportunities?**  
**Where do we want to be as a district in three to five years?**  
**How can we best focus our efforts and work together to get there?**  
**How can we continue to grow as a responsive organization?**



Based on the feedback received from focus groups, Superintendent Roundtables, community and staff surveys, Board Retreats, and the SWOT analysis, four Focus Areas emerged to guide our work and to continue the planning process.

## **1**

### **Powerful Teaching, Leading, and Learning**

Evidence-based Decision Making

Data Informed Culture

Inclusive Excellence

Collaborative Decision Making

Opportunities for Voice

Instructional Monitoring and Support Multiple Pathways to Graduation

Closing the Achievement Gap

Early Learning

Responsive Instruction

SEL/Mindfulness

Academic Rigor

## **2**

### **Family, Student and Community Engagement/Connectedness**

Multiple Opportunities to Collaborate

Transparency

Opportunities for Student and Community Voice

Inclusive, Data Informed Culture

## **3**

### **Fiscal Planning and Facilities**

Ethical governance and transparency

Data Informed Decision Making

Safe Schools

Transparent Conversations/Planning

Short Term and Long Term Planning

### **Improve Communication**

Family & Community Empowerment

Family and Community Engagement

Responsive Communication

Use of Multiple Platforms to Communicate

Provide Equitable Access to Information

During the August 2021, Board of Education Retreat, Board/Superintendent Goals were created, based on feedback received. The goals and feedback were shared openly at a Board Meeting and continue to serve as a North star to build a culture that supports continuous improvement. Through collaboration with key stakeholders, priorities and actions were developed to support the new culture. **The guiding question is: What does success for all students look like?** How can we ensure that our district is positioned for student success in years to come? While our district is strong in so many ways, we can never remain static, and we commit to continuous improvement.

### **Focus Area # 1 - Powerful Teaching, Leading, and Learning**

Goal - Increase Student Outcomes Through Multiple Pathways and a Data-Informed Culture

The District will utilize data, research, experience, and collaboration to inform instruction, strategic planning, and district targets. The process of openly sharing and discussing data, and creating goals for the future has assisted in establishing a data-informed culture. Therefore, the priorities outlined in this plan are directly aligned to the District's mission, vision, and goals which were established by key stakeholders as priorities, based on community and educator feedback, and is the foundation for our focus for the future.

### **Priorities**

Build a district-wide culture of inquiry and data study K-12, with a strong focus on outcomes, targets, and achievement that supports the whole child, whole school, whole community philosophy.

With an emphasis on literacy and the adoption/implementation of our new literacy program American Reading Company, all students who have entered Kindergarten in Port Chester Schools by 2022 and who have remained in our schools through grade 3, will achieve grade level literacy by the end of Grade 3.

Distribute leadership and share accountability between and amongst stakeholders at each school building and at the district level. Include students and families in conversations around student data and student success.

Develop a comprehensive vision for high quality instruction full of opportunities and access for all students that includes differentiation and personalized learning at the elementary, middle, and

high schools. Create a collaborative school environment, rich with cooperation, teamwork, shared ownership, and distributed leadership.

Increase quality professional development opportunities for all staff across our district as evidenced by staff surveys and posted offerings throughout the school year.

### **Actions**

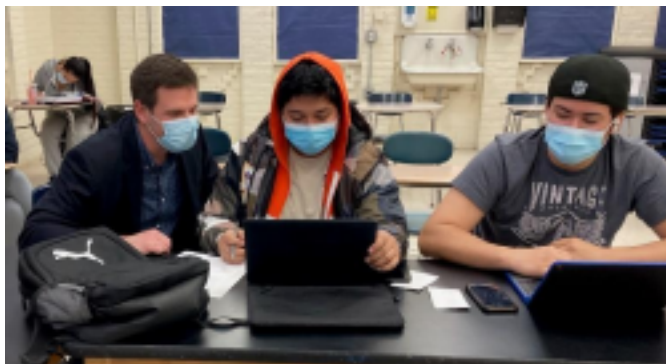
#### **Focus on our Data Driven Essential Agreements**

In Port Chester Schools, we are committed to:

1. Creating a positive, and inclusive data-informed culture where we continue to learn and grow
2. Discussing data regularly, and including all stakeholders in the conversation
3. Making decisions to increase student outcomes using data at all levels
4. Communicating consistently, and in alignment from Pre-K through grade 12. We foster open communication around data with our:
  - Board of Education
  - Teachers and Administrators
  - Parents and Guardians
  - Students
  - Community
5. Following assessment calendars by level, and followed across all grades and buildings

#### **Focus on our Essential Agreements For Teaching and Learning**

1. Our Classrooms Promote Learning
2. Our Students Are Empowered to Learn
3. Our Students Grow As Independent Learners
4. Our Students Are Engaged In Their Learning
5. Our Students “Show What They Know”
6. Our Students Are Responsible Citizens



Create a culture of student agency, where ALL students are exposed to multiple college and career opportunities across grade levels Pre-K-12. Utilize data, research, experience, and collaboration to inform instruction and strategic planning. Openly share data, discussions and goals for the future. Data relating to disproportionality will be examined using Data Study. Engage

Innovare as Thought Partner to provide access to data to the community and educators in accordance with our Essential Agreements, and assist the district in making data-informed decisions. Launch the Principal's Promise Academy- Provide alternative learning options for

students who have yet to be successful in the traditional high school setting through personalized instruction, differentiated scheduling, and college and career readiness activities.

### **What does success look like?**

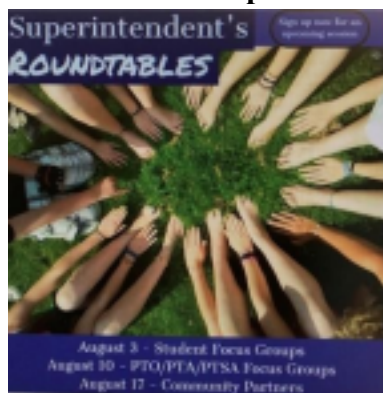
The District will know that it has succeeded when ALL schools are represented and engaged in improvement work. School leaders will embed the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) in their practice which will be evidenced in school culture, instructional leadership and conversations, and will inform the District's ongoing strategic planning as we move forward. Together, key stakeholders will collaborate to identify strengths, omissions, and areas in need of further development. This information will be gathered into a digitized/e-format for review and used in establishing district and school-level expectations, timelines for future work, and deliverables. This will be discussed openly at Board of Education Meetings.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the entire district will adhere to the established data-driven Essential Agreements and continue to have active data teams at each school. All schools embrace the role of administrators and teachers in supporting a culture of inquiry and data study. Students in need of academic and/or behavior intervention services will be referred by their general education teachers or parents to their respective Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) / Response to Intervention (RTI) teams for prompt consideration and development of required plan for services. Students with RTI/MTSS plans will be monitored closely for progress and revisions of their plans as delineated in the District's RTI/MTSS Plan. Click [here](#) to learn about the Students

with disabilities will be afforded opportunities to receive their education and services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as delineated in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

During the 2023-2024 school year, the District will continue to promote healthy and safe learning environments where students can receive the instruction and other supports they need to learn and achieve at high levels. All schools will embrace the role of administrators and teachers in the active use of positive behavioral supports and interventions and ensure that all students have access to safe and supportive environments conducive to learning. School Principals will engage in continuous professional development to ensure that the District mitigates elements leading to disproportionality of the suspension rate for students with disabilities.

### **Focus Area #2 Improve Communication**



Goal - Improve Communication and Ensure Systemic Equitable Access to Information Port Chester Schools continue to create opportunities for all students, teachers, leaders, staff, parents, and members of the community to feel included, respected, and well-informed. We see our diversity as a strength, and we are engaging stakeholders in conversations about inclusive excellence and equitable access in all programs, practices, and initiatives. This commitment fits into the district's vision of Success for All Students because when all students are supported and have access to programs and learning opportunities it ensures that they will be successful in our schools and therefore it is an important priority to

pursue as it is in our students' best interest.

### **Action Plans**



Utilize multiple platforms and outlets to broadcast important information to celebrate and highlight the district's success stories. Collaborate and be inclusive more often to allow for meaningful discourse with key stakeholders. Include opportunity for student voice. Celebrate publicly our students' and staff's accomplishments. Ensure access to translation devices at all Board of Education Meetings. Use Covey's Speed of Trust and 13 Habits of High Trust Leaders to guide relationships. Ongoing collaborative conversations with elected officials. Opportunities for student voice.

Implement a robust school climate survey system for staff, students, and families beginning in September 2023 with a participation rate of at least 50% for constituencies throughout the school year

### **What does success look like?**

Building a culture of collaboration and trust is the necessary foundation for inclusive excellence. Based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered, the need for consistency and collaboration across schools has emerged as a priority. Lack of collaboration and consistency in the past has led to disconnected and isolated decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and programmatic decisions that were not supported by data. One of the goals of the Board of Education for the 2021-2022 year is: Foster A Sense of Community Connectedness. In the same way that the Board and District aim to ensure that students, families, and district staff engage in meaningful and authentic interactions and to forge and sustain community partnerships to expand opportunities for students, a collaborative environment, which emphasizes shared ownership, is key, at all schools.

## **Focus Area # 3 Family (student) and Community Engagement and Connectedness**

### **Goal-** Foster a Sense of Community Connectedness and Pride in Ram Nation



Our goal is to continue engaging with stakeholder groups including Port Chester students, families, staff, and the larger community to assess strengths and capabilities while identifying opportunities for growth.

### **Priorities**

Create a culture of inclusivity to provide all students with fair, just, and personalized learning and growth opportunities.

### **Actions**

Ensure that students, families, and district staff engage in meaningful and authentic interactions. Forge and sustain community partnerships to expand opportunities for students both in and outside of the school day. Create District-wide opportunities for students and families to



celebrate Port Chester Pride and a sense of “Ramily.” Build partnerships with Community Based Organizations to increase student outcomes and bolster afterschool programs. Inspire community events where students and families can positively learn and enjoy student learning together.

Continue to develop and maintain current relationships with local universities and colleges. Expand on further partnerships with at least 3 additional local universities and colleges by June 2025 that will offer more opportunities for our students, and create a pipeline of additional talent for staff recruitment

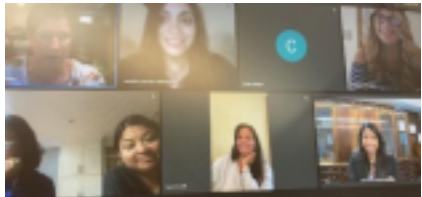
### **What does success look like?**

Build protocols for talking and engaging in aligned conversations. Strengthen the connection between our UPK and our Elementary schools. School and district leaders and K-12 faculty will participate in professional learning that is tailored to their needs. All students participate in district initiatives that build a sense of connection and pride through multiple district-wide Initiatives (K-12)- *World Kindness Day, Ram Nation Pride Day, MLK Interfaith Celebration, Special Education Gala/Parent Engagement, STEAM Fest, etc.* District-wide after school and summer school that partner with community organizations.

### **Focus Area # 4 Fiscal Planning and Facilities**

**Goal** - Engage in Strategic Planning for Fiscal Responsibilities and Facilities

### **Actions**



Collaborate for strategic planning to safeguard fiscal stability, while allowing for a proactive approach to improving and maintaining safe schools and well-maintained facilities and grounds for which our community can be proud. Review facilities budget, and operations for long-term planning purposes. Ongoing conversations with our elected officials about the current reality of the district and community.

### **What does success look like?**

Success is demonstrated through ongoing planning, realized savings in energy cost reductions, long range planning to ensure major mechanical systems and buildings/facilities are safe, clean and in good condition. The goal is to enhance the student learning experience by providing state of the art learning and athletic spaces, a healthy environment, and nutritious menus in cafeterias. The environment that students and staff occupy is a nexus to supporting the educational goals of the school district.

### **Technology**

Empowering Future-Ready Education through Innovative Technology: The Port Chester School

District's Technology Department is dedicated to fostering a transformative learning environment by seamlessly integrating cutting-edge technology solutions. Our commitment to digital literacy, personalized learning, and robust infrastructure aims to equip students, educators, and administrators with the tools they need to excel in an increasingly digital world. Through strategic partnerships, professional development, and data-driven decision-making, we pave the way for an interconnected, adaptable, and equitable educational experience for all members of our district community.

### **Goals for the Technology Department**

- *Improve Infrastructure Reliability:* Reduce system downtime by 20% over the next fiscal year through proactive maintenance and infrastructure upgrades, ensuring uninterrupted access to digital resources for students and staff.
- *Foster Data-Driven Decision Making:* Develop and implement a comprehensive data analytics framework within the next year, enabling administrators to make informed decisions on technology resource allocation, curriculum effectiveness, and student performance.
- *Enhance Cybersecurity Measures:* Decrease the number of cybersecurity incidents by 25% within the next year through continuous security audits, staff training, and the implementation of advanced cybersecurity tools.
- *Promote Responsible Digital Citizenship:* Over the next three years, implement a comprehensive digital citizenship curriculum that reaches 100% of students, focusing on educating them about ethical online behavior, privacy protection, respectful communication, and critical evaluation of digital content. This initiative aims to cultivate a safe and respectful online environment while empowering students to become responsible and informed digital citizens.
- *Expand Student Technology Internships:* Within the next academic year, establish partnerships with at least three local technology companies to provide mentorship through our district summer student internship program

### **Safety & Security**

The Safety and Security Department at Port Chester School District is dedicated to creating a safe and secure learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Our mission is to implement comprehensive measures that ensure the physical and emotional well-being of everyone within our educational community. With a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement, our department strives to maintain a supportive atmosphere that fosters academic growth and personal development.

### **Key Goals and Objectives:**

1. *Safety Infrastructure:* Our first priority is to assess and enhance the safety infrastructure of all school facilities within the district. This includes conducting regular safety audits, upgrading security systems, and implementing appropriate access control measures.
2. *Emergency Preparedness:* We regularly update comprehensive emergency response plans for various scenarios, including natural disasters, medical emergencies, and potential threats. Regular drills and training sessions will be conducted to ensure all stakeholders

are well-prepared to handle emergencies effectively.

3. *Student and Staff Well-being*: The safety and well-being of students and staff are of utmost importance. We will focus on promoting mental health awareness, establishing counseling and support programs, and implementing anti-bullying initiatives to create a positive and inclusive environment for everyone.
4. *Community Partnerships*: Collaboration with law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and parents is crucial for enhancing safety measures. We will actively engage in partnerships to strengthen our safety network and share resources and knowledge.
5. *Technology and Innovation*: Embracing modern technology and innovative solutions will aid in bolstering our security efforts. We will invest in state-of-the-art systems, such as video surveillance, access control, and threat detection tools.
6. *Continuous Training*: Regular training and professional development for school staff will be a priority. This will ensure that they are well-informed about safety protocols, aware of potential risks, and equipped to respond appropriately in challenging situations.
7. *Safety Culture*: Fostering a culture of safety and security within the district is essential. We will encourage open communication, encourage reporting of concerns, and celebrate safety achievements to build a collective sense of responsibility for everyone's well-being.
8. *Data-Driven Approach*: Utilizing data and analytics, we will continuously monitor safety trends and incidents to identify potential areas for improvement and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and intervention strategies.

By prioritizing safety and security within the Port Chester School District, we believe that our commitment to safeguarding our learning community will pave the way for academic success, personal growth, and a thriving educational experience for all stakeholders.

### **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy**

Port Chester Schools has two main areas of cybersecurity. Internally we focus on data privacy while externally we focus on the infrastructure to provide safeguards.

The district DPS team meets biweekly to discuss, review and improve our data privacy protocols. These include requiring all vendors to sign data privacy agreements and parent bill of rights agreements. We ensure the district is in compliance with NYS Ed-Law 2d and protecting student and staff data. We provide robust training for all new teachers about cybersecurity and data privacy as well as require all staff to complete a data privacy refresher training each year. We also constantly have email campaigns to all staff about the importance of not sharing student data, protecting and maintaining passwords, and how to identify a phishing threat. We also have an external BOCES consultant review all of our procedures and meet with the DPS team to discuss findings and make recommendations.

In terms of our cybersecurity infrastructure and safeguards, we have several network-facing devices that protect outsiders from getting through to the district network from the internet such as an intrusion prevention/detection system and firewall. While browsing the internet in the district or on a district device, the students have their web browsing activity filtered to prevent

browsing inappropriate content or malicious websites containing malware. Students' email communications are protected through configurations such as geo-fencing, spam protection, whitelisted/blacklisted senders and other privacy controls. On any device that isn't a domain-enrolled Chromebook where the device is safely locked down utilizing Google's Admin Console, the users are protected with Next Generation Anti-Virus and Policy to prevent any malicious programs from executing and to ensure good computer hygiene.

By focusing on cybersecurity and data privacy, Port Chester School District is committed to protecting its digital assets and ensuring the privacy and security of sensitive information. This proactive approach will build trust among all stakeholders and continue to provide a safe digital environment for learning.