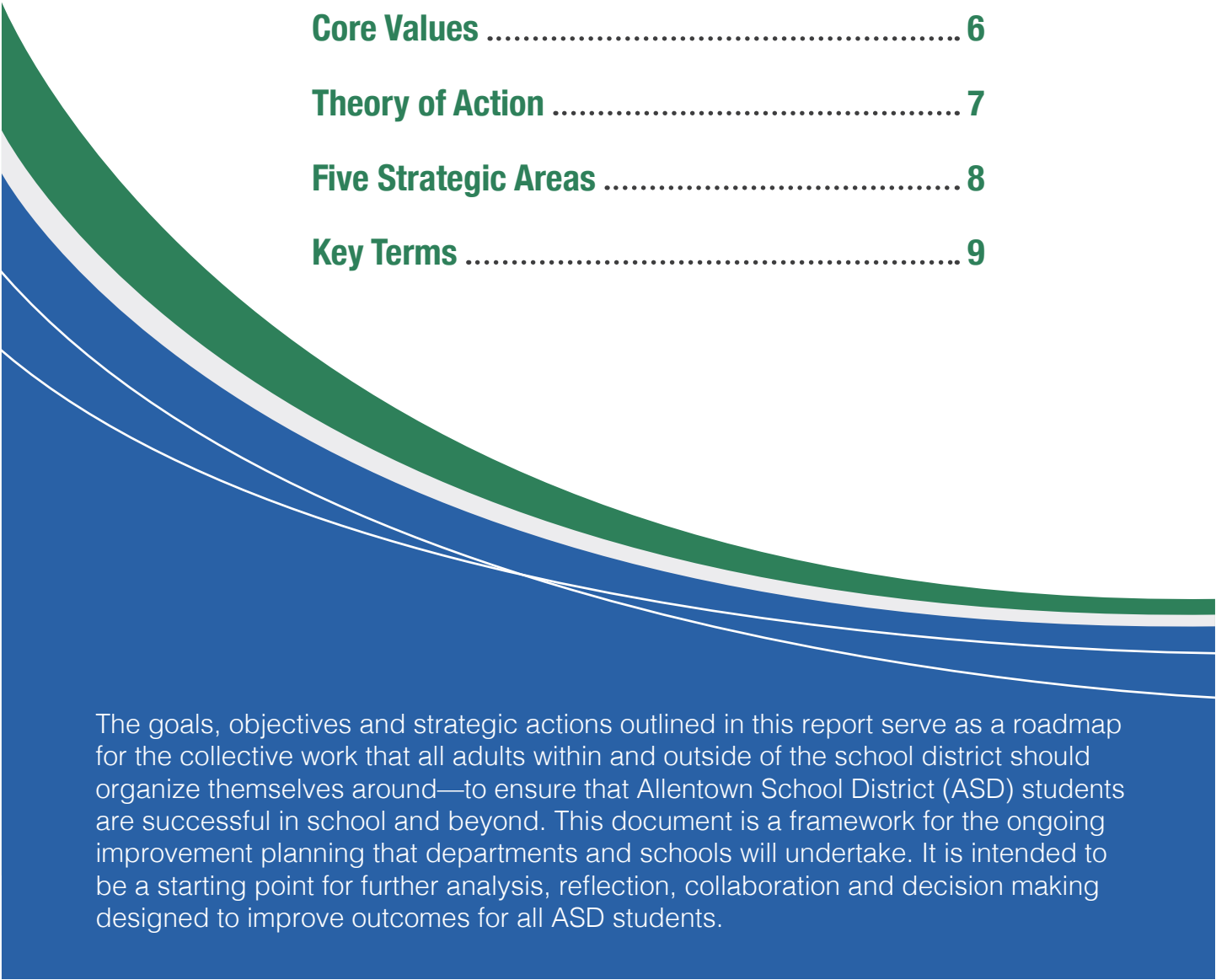


2017–2021

Allentown School District
Strategic Framework
#ASDCommittedtoExcellence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the School Board President	1
Message from the Superintendent	2
District Data Snapshot	3
ASD Commitment to Equity	5
Vision	6
Mission	6
Core Values	6
Theory of Action	7
Five Strategic Areas	8
Key Terms	9



The goals, objectives and strategic actions outlined in this report serve as a roadmap for the collective work that all adults within and outside of the school district should organize themselves around—to ensure that Allentown School District (ASD) students are successful in school and beyond. This document is a framework for the ongoing improvement planning that departments and schools will undertake. It is intended to be a starting point for further analysis, reflection, collaboration and decision making designed to improve outcomes for all ASD students.

MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

The rapidity of change in our world today is incredible. The School Board and the administration of the Allentown School District are acutely aware of the need to meet the challenge of matching this change via our approach to providing a high quality and equitable education to our students. We recognize the absolute necessity that every student be college and career ready upon their graduation from the Allentown School District.

The Allentown School District Strategic Framework represents the assessed evaluation of our need for a honed and purposeful approach to educating our students. Having embarked upon this iterative process over the past year, the development of the ASD Strategic Framework seeks to place us in a position where we can confidently assure our students, their families, and our community business leaders, of how our vision and mission will be achieved. We are keenly astute to the benefits of our partnership and it is through this partnership that we will work hard to ensure that our goals are met.

The Allentown School District is committed to the provision of equity in education as a basis for this process. We acknowledge the challenges of the times and culture we live in and are committed to adjusting our methods of educating our students. We also acknowledge this need as a means of ensuring that our students develop the skills required to thrive in our world.

This Strategic Framework is driven by a passion and commitment to designing and implementing a system of education that will be a model for others in advancing the educational outcomes for all students. We cannot do this alone, and need to rely on all of our partners to match us in this passion and commitment. We invite you to join us in creating this new vision and to helping make our core values a reality that we live and educate our students by daily.

David F. Zimmerman

ASD School Board President
Fall 2017

Charlie Thiel

ASD School Board President
Winter 2017



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings ASD Community!

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our District's Strategic Framework. Just as our city is experiencing a 21st century renaissance, so too is our District. While the city's renaissance boasts of technological innovation and architectural and economic ventures, the ASD renaissance is purposefully shaped by the needs of our students, staff, community and business partners. The valuable feedback received during our community discussions and focus groups with stakeholders were not only personal points of learning, but vehicles through which continuous improvement, equity aligned with outcomes, authentic community engagement, and our responsibility to prepare all students for college and career readiness were identified as pillars of the ASD commitment to excellence.

As I envision our commitment to excellence, it is these four pillars on which our strategic framework must rest. What is more, the work identified within this framework is fundamental to setting the bar higher for our students and our staff. How will we set the bar higher? The answer to that question lies within our Theory of Action introduced later in this document. However, it is the combination of our theory of action, the objectives, progress indicators, performance measures and strategic actions that provide the structure and framework to guide our work ahead. It is imperative that this work is ingrained in a collaborative effort with our stakeholders; an effort that is deliberate, and aimed at the development of a first quality education for our students.

Please know the message from the community requiring transparency and accountability was heard. This is why accountability is an element embedded throughout the strategic framework. While comprehensive accountability does not emerge instantly, we will intentionally build a systemic accountability system that begins with this document and is reflected in the District dashboards. For this reason, we have intentionally developed dashboards for three critical areas. We will periodically update and expand our District dashboards to additional strategic areas as we address our infrastructure and identify meaningful, accurate data. It is the communication of those data which will be used to rebuild trust, and establish transparency as the normative standard.

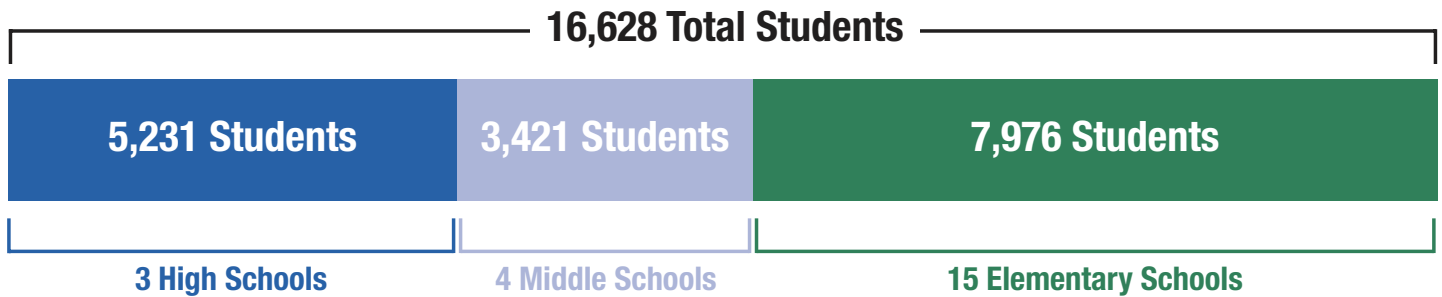
In closing, let me reiterate that the success of this framework rests on a shared vision and community ownership between ASD and all stakeholder groups. It is my sincere hope the ASD community shares in my excitement as we work together on behalf of our dynamic students, staff, and community members.

Thomas E. Parker

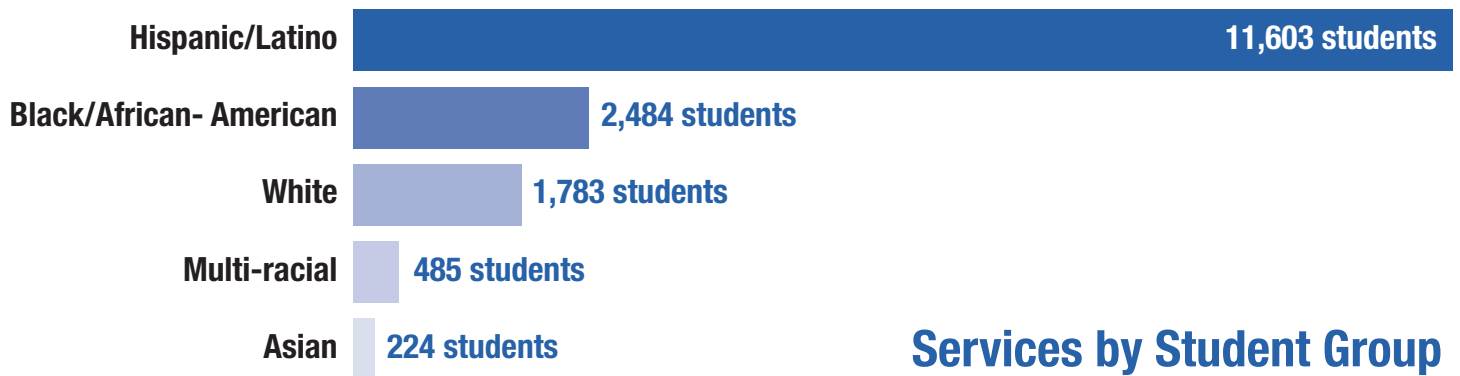
Superintendent
Fall/Winter 2017

DISTRICT DATA SNAPSHOT

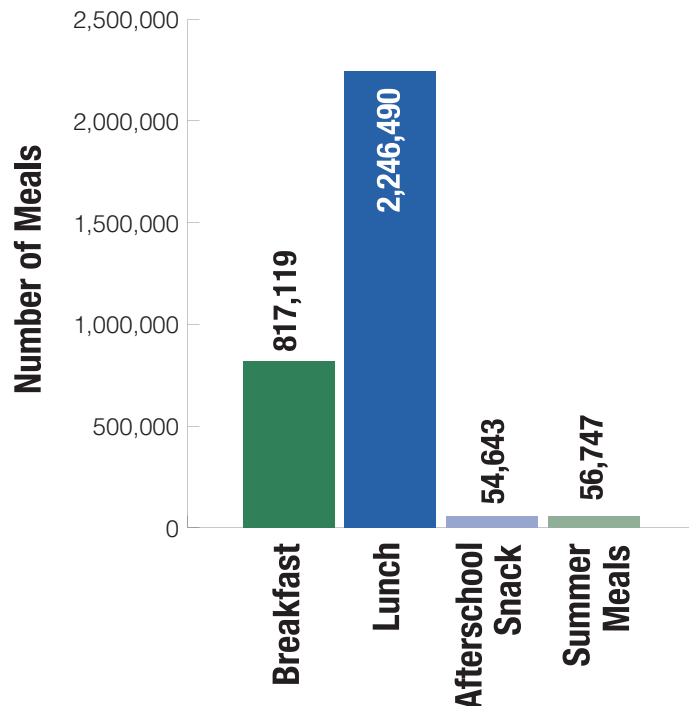
2016–2017 Enrollment



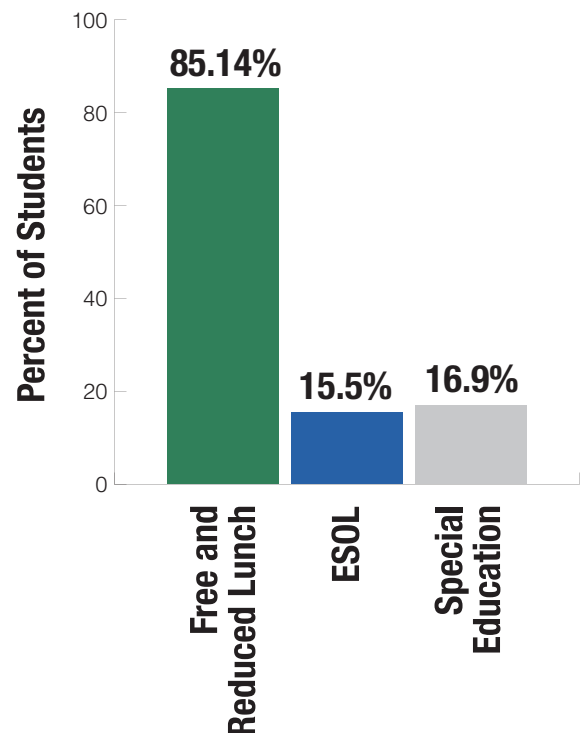
Student Demographics



2016–2017 Meals

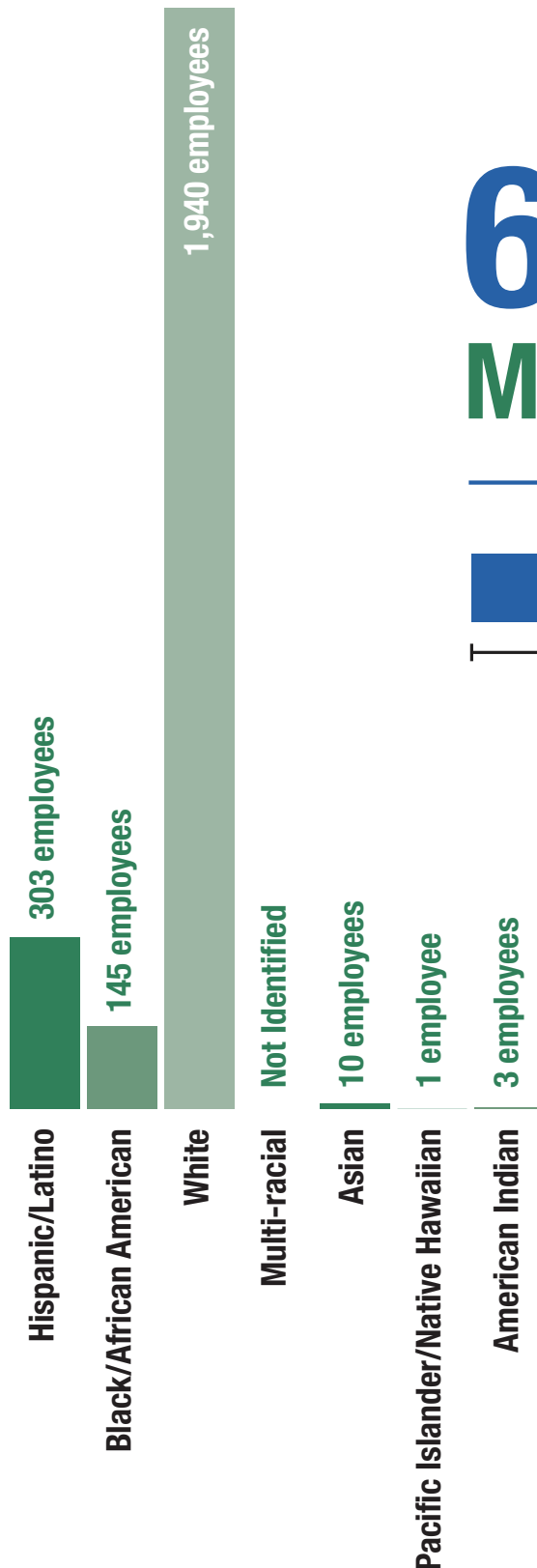


Services by Student Group



Workforce Demographics (2,429 total employees)

DISTRICT DATA SNAPSHOT



68% of teachers have their
MASTER'S DEGREE
— or equivalent —



\$
\$
2017–2018
Annual Budget
\$305,924,808.00
\$
\$
\$
\$

ASD COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Here in ASD, our commitment to equity is rooted in our District's Equity Policy, adopted by the Board of Directors in January, 2017. As one of the few Districts within the state of Pennsylvania with such a policy, the Board of Directors is leading the State in their commitment to the assurance of equitable and fair educational opportunities for all students. This commitment will be demonstrated through an emphasis on personalized learning and instruction for all students regardless of educational classification, language proficiency or any other need. Additionally, the school district is committed to creating and sustaining a racially, ethnically, culturally and economically sensitive school environment that provides equitable access to a high standard of teaching, learning and success for all students.

As an organizational core value, equity will be aligned with outcomes and accountability at the departmental, building, classroom and student levels. This District-wide approach to equity is necessary to ensure students are provided with the opportunities, support, and resources required for quality post-secondary experiences and to prepare our students as global citizens in a digital age.

Additionally, our Equity Policy is augmented by the progress indicators, performance measures, and strategic initiatives identified within the Strategic Plan. This alignment of equity with outcomes and accountability is critical and reflected in the framework below:

The Allentown School District is deeply committed to equity and has the highest expectations for staff and students. Our commitment means that we will:

- *Allocate resources (time, funds and talent) according to student needs*
- *Disaggregate data to identify student needs and plan accordingly*
- *Engage our family and community with an asset-based approach that builds on strengths*
- *Institutionalize culturally responsive practices in the classroom, schoolhouse, offices, policies, structures and wherever else it may be necessary*
- *Deepen our commitment through collective professional learning*



VISION

Each and every student, with the active support of the entire community, will graduate ready to thrive in a diverse and complex world.

MISSION

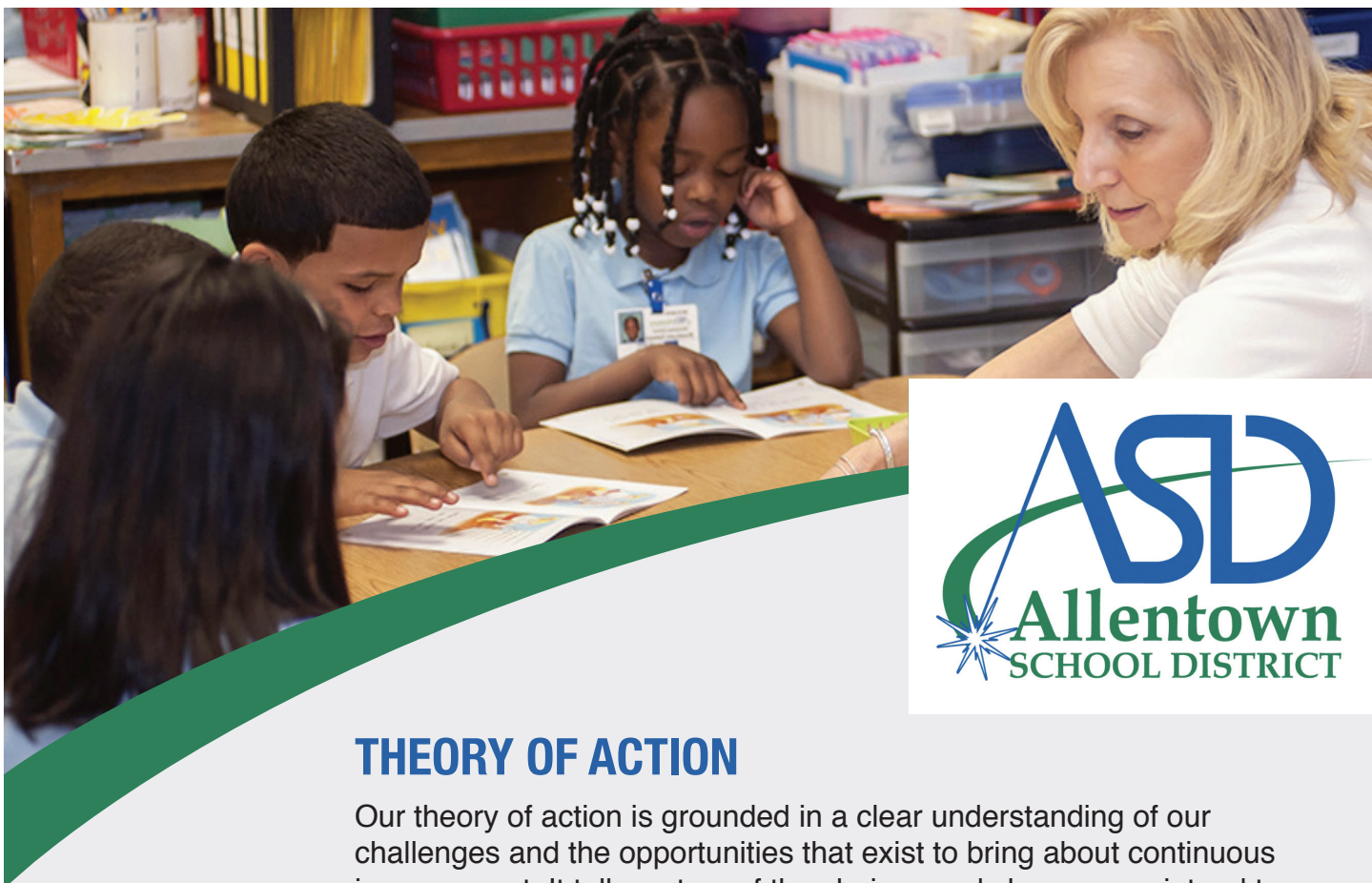
Each and every student will graduate college and career ready by having their individual needs met through active engagement in a rigorous, safe and nurturing learning environment.

CORE VALUES

In ASD, our commitment to Excellence, Partnership and Equity means that we believe in:

- Honoring each student's unique qualities
- Ensuring equity of access and opportunities
- Nurturing the pursuit of lifelong learning
- Strengthening partnerships with families and communities
- Promoting cultural responsiveness
- Building trust and mutual respect





THEORY OF ACTION

Our theory of action is grounded in a clear understanding of our challenges and the opportunities that exist to bring about continuous improvement. It tells a story of the choices and changes we intend to make to improve teaching, learning, and leadership.

IF WE:

Cultivate a culture in which students feel safe, valued and nurtured;
Center the district's work on personalized learning and instruction;
Collaborate meaningfully and deeply with families and communities;
Create and expect organizational effectiveness and accountability; and
Calibrate leadership and learning at all levels,

THEN:

ASD students will graduate college and career ready with the skills necessary to explore and pursue post-secondary options that lead to success in work and life.



Our Theory of Action will enable ASD to focus on the following five strategic areas:

1

Cultivate a culture in which students feel safe, valued and nurtured.

2

Center the district's work on personalized learning and instruction.

3

Collaborate meaningfully and deeply with families and communities.

4

Create and expect organizational effectiveness and accountability.

5

Calibrate leadership and learning at all levels.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Each strategic area has a high-level **goal** statement, corresponding **objectives** that can be measured, **progress indicators** that describe areas that can be measured, specific **performance metrics** that describe how the objectives will be measured and **strategic actions** that delineate the steps ASD will take to reach the goal.

Goal Statement: High level language that describes the overall intent of the strategic area. For example, *My goal is to be healthy.*

Objectives: Measurable actions that are aligned to the goal statement. For example, *My goal is to be healthy, so I will eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly.*

Progress Indicators: Specific actions that are aligned to objectives and goals. For example, *My goal is to be healthy, so I will eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly. I will measure my progress by calculating my intake of fruits and vegetables and recording how much I exercise every week.*

Performance Metrics: A specific metric associated with the progress indicator that describes how progress will be measured. For example, *My goal is to be healthy, so I will eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly. I will measure my progress by calculating my intake of fruits and vegetables and recording how much I exercise every week. My performance will be determined by the percentage of my total diet that consists of fruits and vegetables and my weight in pounds.*

Strategic Actions: Steps that will be taken by individuals and the organization to achieve the goal. For example, *My goal is to be healthy, so I will eat more fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly. I will measure my progress by calculating my intake of fruits and vegetables and recording how much I exercise every week. My performance will be determined by the percentage of my total diet that consists of fruits and vegetables and my weight in pounds. Strategic actions to achieve this goal will be, joining a gym and waking up at 5:30 3x a week to exercise for one hour per session; purchasing cookbooks comprised of healthy recipes and taking my lunch to work rather than eating fast food.*

Middle School Transformation: The collective power of the full staff to improve student achievement school wide based on five critical elements; teacher knowledge and disposition; professional/praxis communities; program coherence; technical resources; and leadership.

College and Career Readiness: Students who graduate college and career ready have the academic skills, self-agency and disposition to succeed in college and navigate an increasingly complex world on their own terms.

1 Cultivate a culture in which students feel safe, valued and nurtured.

Every student will be provided a safe and healthy learning environment where caring, respectful relationships are fostered with staff and peers.

Goal: To ensure that every ASD student is learning in a safe and healthy environment where they are respected and valued as individuals from many different backgrounds.

Objectives:

- Reduce chronic absenteeism
- Reduce suspensions
- Increase positive connections between students and caring adults
- Increase positive peer to peer interactions
- Increase access to wrap-around services
- Increase access to integrated school based physical and emotional health care



Critical Area 1

Progress Indicator	Baseline Metric	2017–2018 Actual
Student Health	30% Completion of mandated services referrals	
Out of School Suspensions	9% District suspension rate	
Chronic Absenteeism	20.6% Chronic absenteeism rate	
Critical Building Deficiencies	69 District Critical Deficiencies (HMMS, RMS, Cleveland, McKinley, Jefferson)	
District Workplace Safety	179 reported claims	
Building Cleanliness ¹	75% Acceptable Appearance Rate	

¹Acceptable building cleanliness is based on the methodology set forth in Best Practices for School District Facilities and Maintenance, July 2015.

Strategic actions:

- Develop a multi-tiered support system in order to differentiate services and interventions according to student needs
- Partner with community agencies to maximize access to needed and available services, to better serve students and families
- Develop robust processes and data systems that will enable quick intervention regarding discipline, attendance, and academics
- Implement restorative justice practices and/or Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) throughout the district, to reform disciplinary practices, build a more positive culture, and attend to social and emotional needs
- Engage staff in professional learning activities that build their capacity to foster safe and healthy learning environments for all students
- Reorganize staff resources to focus on acceptable levels of building appearance
- Develop Building Care Committees to pre-identify and address building needs
- Develop comprehensive student health initiative through community health partnerships

Additional strategic actions:

- Establish Elementary-Middle school transition committees
- Assess, standardize, and monitor the use of PBIS and restorative practices K-12
- Implement restorative justice Districtwide
- Develop Community Coalitions to support transient families
- Revise the District's parent engagement strategy to assess and support families of students with chronic absenteeism
- Integrate all building security and emergency systems to promote optimal efficiency, security and safety for students and staff

2 Center the district's work on personalized learning and instruction.

Students will be provided a variety of educational programming that is centered on supporting the distinct learning needs, assets, and cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Goal: The individual academic and SEL needs of all students will be met through culturally responsive and student-centered learning.

Objectives:

- Increase PreK exposure
- Increase Kindergarten readiness
- Increase reading and math proficiency rates
- Increase academic achievement of all students K-12
- Increase graduation rates
- Reduce dropout rates

Critical Area 2

Progress Indicator	Baseline Metric ¹	2017–2018 Actual
Kindergarten Readiness	27% Emergent Readers	
	40% Pre-K Exposure	
Grade 3 Reading Proficiency	21% Proficiency Rate ²	
	42% State Standard Assessment Proficiency Rate	
Grade 8 Algebra	9% Proficiency Rate	
	8.1% State Standard Assessment Proficiency Rate	
District Graduation Rates	64% Cohort Graduation Rate	
	79% 12 th grade graduation rate	
District Dropout Rates	6.3% annual dropout rate	
College and Career Readiness	9% 10 th Grade College Success Readiness ³	
	18.2% College Access Exam participation rate ⁴	
	10% AP course enrollment	
	14.8% Dual enrollment participation rate	
Middle Grades Transformation	Building Level Transformation Capacity ⁵	
9 th Grade Success Index	% attendance rate	
	avg. grade level GPA	
	grade level citizenship rate ⁶	

¹All students are reflected in the baseline metric. However, all subgroups (race/ethnicity, gender, IEP, ELL) baseline metrics are analyzed, considered, and addressed through District equity goals.

²Derived from computer adaptive assessments that provides accurate, norm-referenced scores for students in grades K-12

³College success readiness is defined by PSAT participation and performance

⁴College access exams are defined as SAT and ACT participation rates

⁵Building Level Transformation Capacity defined as results-oriented leadership, integrated professional learning, and a robust instructional core program

⁶ASD citizenship defined by alternative to suspension and out-of-school suspension rates.

Strategic actions:

- Create individual student success plans aimed at capturing students' strengths and interests, addressing their academic and social emotional learning needs, and guiding their transition to high school and beyond
- Develop rigorous and culturally responsive curriculum management system aligned to best practices, district needs and state requirements
- Develop and implement a robust data system to track individual progress of students and the progress of various subgroups
- Create school-based and district-based interdisciplinary teams to respond to data/needs of students
- Enhance and expand use of technology to provide anytime/anywhere access and increase student-centered learning opportunities
- Develop Science Technology Engineering Arts Math (STEAM) opportunities promoting curriculum integration, critical thinking and personalized learning experiences
- Implement culturally responsive professional development
- Expand the District Arts curriculum and develop a recruitment pipeline from elementary through high school to increase student participation, and support career pathways to the Arts.

Additional strategic actions:

- Begin curriculum alignment process
- Develop tiered support system based on Early Warning Indicators (EWI), including academics and chronic absenteeism
- Establish ASD mentoring corps
- Develop career readiness pathway
- Develop districtwide one-to-one device model
- Establish an Allentown School District Literacy Coalition
- Develop plan at each middle school to ensure robust college and career exposure for all students
- Develop external partnerships to support digital access for all students
- Evaluate and align school counseling services with national standards with an emphasis on college and career readiness
- Develop a whole school transformation model for each District middle school



3 Collaborate meaningfully and deeply with families and communities.

Families and community stakeholders will be active participants in the decision-making process to bring about sustainable improvement.

Goal: Build on assets of a wide range of community members and families, and engage them as active partners in the success of ASD.

Objectives:

- Increase engagement, satisfaction and participation of community and families in ASD

Progress indicators:

- Customer/parent satisfaction
- Number of community/business partnerships
- Information transparency and access

Performance metrics:

- Surveys
- Number of family partnerships
 - Number of activities that facilitate reciprocal learning between families and school staff
 - Cultural responsive practices that engage families and are linked to learning
- School and district partnerships
 - Number of children/families served
 - Costs
- Establish a comprehensive District Early Warning system
- Philanthropic support



Strategic actions:

- Develop comprehensive plan for increasing family and community partnerships to meet academic, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and health needs of children
- Improve customer service of central office and schools
- Create school-based community engagement teams that are charged with fostering strong partnerships between schools, families and communities through numerous cultural meaningful practices
- Cultivate an assets-based approach to partnering with families and community stakeholders

Additional strategic actions:

- Early Childhood collaborative learning partnership
- Establishment of ASD literacy coalition
- Establish Institute of Higher Education (IHE) partnership for curricular alignment (esp. math)
- Establish community coalition for increasing technology access
- Establish Health Council to review, analyze and recommend improvements
- Develop parent university and community coalition to support transient families
- Establish ASD parent coalition
- Partner with IHE's, Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) to increase workforce diversity

4 Create and expect organizational effectiveness and accountability.

All stakeholders will be supported through efficient and effective processes, data systems and tools that are driven by customer satisfaction and results.

Goal: Ensure support and accountability for excellence in operations through a customer service stance.

Objectives:

- Improve the administration of ASD internal and external facing services through data driven decision making and a commitment to continuous improvement through performance management

Critical Area 3

Progress Indicator	Baseline Metric	2017–2018 Actual
Structural Fiscal Deficit	\$14,044,245.00 ⁵	
Staff Attendance	88% ⁶	
Workforce Diversity	19% minority employee representation	

⁵2016 – 2017 projected deficit.

⁶Teacher data extracted November 29, 2017.

Strategic actions:

- Establish operational metrics for system in order to monitor and increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Establish data-based performance management system to foster data-driven decision making and continuous improvement

- Professional learning system for operations department to ensure capacity building of staff at all levels
- Align job descriptions and contracts to new model of performance management to ensure that the right people are in the right positions and to increase efficiencies
- Develop a tiered professional development calendar to target employee needs in support of strategic framework

Additional strategic actions:

- Coordination of PreK programs according to feeder patterns
- Develop middle school transformation process
- Develop model for intervention in lower performing schools
- Develop system for monitoring school performance
- Establish process for ensuring equity of tech purchases
- Establish process for reviewing and addressing building infrastructure needs
- Revamp training and supervision of non-certificated personnel
- Revamp districtwide communications procedures
- Audit and review alignment of district expenditures to goals, policies and regulations

5 Calibrate leadership and learning at all levels.

Leaders at all levels of the school system will be provided an opportunity to develop based on their assets and areas of growth.

Goal: The ASD board and system leaders will meet the highest standards of values-driven and collaborative leadership.

Objectives:

- Improve governance and leadership processes throughout ASD in order to promote collaboration, partnership and accountability

Progress indicators:

- Perception/confidence of community
- Monitoring calendars
- Clear vision, mission and values
- Performance management system
- Improved operations
- Increased student achievement



Performance metrics:

- Survey data
- Two-year policy revision calendar
- Clear and accessible documents
- Board agendas and meetings that reflect district priorities
- Increased community partnerships
- Established pipeline of leaders

Strategic actions:

- Develop plan for professional development in governance
- Create leadership development strategy and plan for staff at multiple levels and community partners
- Conduct annual self-assessment of Board, including community input

Additional strategic actions:

- Develop career ladder for certificated staff, including personalized professional development
- Develop comprehensive leadership development program
- Establish Board of Education self-assessment and development process
- Establish two year monitoring calendar for Board of Education



www.allentownsd.org

www.pdksolutions.org

