

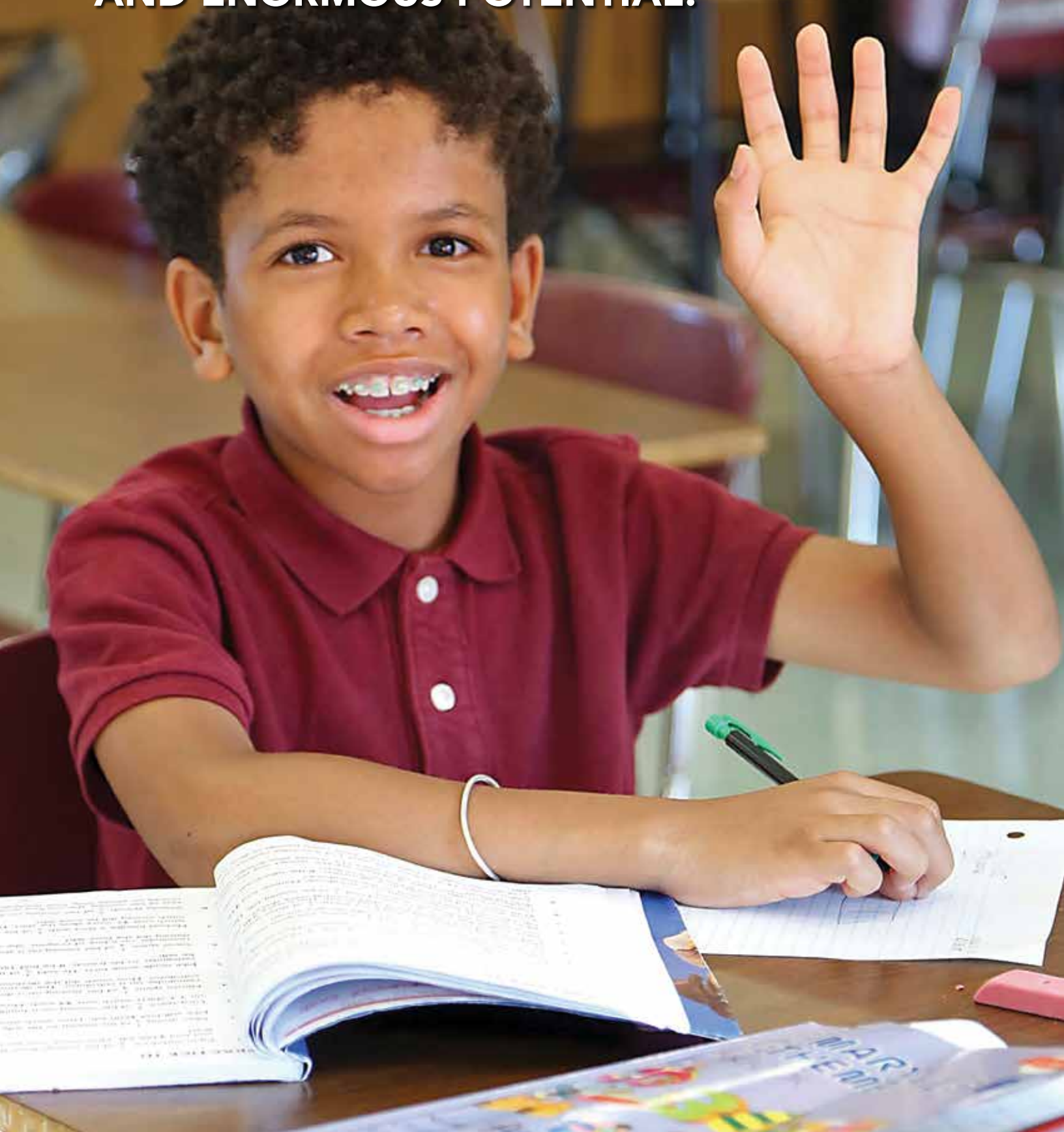


# **BUILDING A GENERATION**

CITY SCHOOLS' BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS



**EVERY YEAR, STUDENTS ENTER CITY  
SCHOOLS WITH TALENT, DREAMS,  
AND ENORMOUS POTENTIAL.**





**“The success of our schools can’t be measured only by proficiency on statewide tests and increases in graduation rates. We must think in terms of the skills and dispositions we foster, the quality and depth of experiences we provide, the opportunities we create for our young people to discover their voices and develop their agency. All of our students in all of our schools deserve all that a high-quality education makes possible—talents that are discovered, doors that open, and lives that change.”**

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises,  
CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools

TEN YEARS AGO, Baltimore City Public Schools launched an ambitious agenda to transform our city’s public schools. Today, our portfolio includes schools with different academic focuses, approaches, and grade spans. On any given day, students in Baltimore’s classrooms may be learning through a Montessori, International Baccalaureate, or arts integration approach; they may be using 3-D printers or programming robots, getting a music lesson from a member of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, producing videos, or sharpening their debate skills. Students can choose their middle and high schools, and individual schools have significant control over their budgets. Our innovative contracts with teachers and administrators encourage and reward professional growth, and the district and schools have forged partnerships with parents, community organizations, businesses, and local and national philanthropies.

But we have much more to do. After a decade of reform, far too few of our students are reaching the academic standards they should, and too few experience the excitement about learning that encourages them to set and meet high expectations. Too few of our staff members have opportunities to experience the state-of-the-art professional learning that will inspire their practice—and lead both to their own professional growth and to increased success for our students.

It is time now to build on the foundation of reform to ensure that all students—no matter their background or where they live in our city—have access to educational opportunities that meet their needs, spark their interests, and position them for success in our increasingly international society and global economy. To set high expectations and help students meet them, we need now to look to research-proven best practices not only in our city, state, and nation, but also in the more than two dozen countries that routinely outperform the United States on measures of academic achievement and educational equity.

Today, City Schools stands ready to take the next steps in our transformation. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, we will pursue a comprehensive approach that both leverages our existing strengths and turns a deep focus to work in three key areas—student wholeness, literacy, and staff leadership.

Our goal: To build a generation of young people with the skills, knowledge, and understanding to succeed in college, careers, and community, not just here in Baltimore but in any city in the world.

“Possessing knowledge, in my understanding of the world, is the closest we can come to enlightenment, and perhaps that is why I have such a thirst for it. I question whatever I feel needs questioning, and I feel that it is my responsibility to understand the topic to the best of my ability. Simply put, I want to know things because the world is here and so am I.”

Tyler Williams, City Schools Class of 2017



## BUILDING A GENERATION: CITY SCHOOLS' BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

### DEVELOPING THE BLUEPRINT

In summer and fall 2016, City Schools CEO Sonja Brookins Santelises met with hundreds of students, families, staff members, and community stakeholders across Baltimore to learn their ideas on how to improve outcomes for our students and schools. She heard some common themes.

**WHOLENESS** We need to recognize that our students are unique people with unique experiences, talents, challenges, and social, emotional, and physical lives. By keeping the wholeness of our students in mind, meeting their needs, hearing their voices, and building partnerships with their families and communities, we can ignite their passion for learning.

**LITERACY** We need to emphasize and improve literacy teaching across all grades and content areas. For our students not only to meet and exceed academic standards but to have access to the opportunities they want and deserve, they must be able to comprehend and analyze texts of all kinds and express themselves in multiple genres.

**LEADERSHIP** Teachers, coaches, custodians, school police officers, principals, and other staff members all have a leadership role to play in connecting with, supporting, inspiring, and challenging students and contributing to their success.

**THESE THREE AREAS ARE INTERTWINED:** If students are motivated and excited about learning, have the foundational skills to think critically, analyze deeply, and express themselves powerfully, and have adults around them who encourage them to persist and excel, they will be positioned to move steadily toward high school graduation and postsecondary success.

IN WINTER AND SPRING 2017, Dr. Santelises charged a work group of district and school leaders and community partners with exploring national and international research on best practices in the areas of student wholeness, literacy, and leadership. Their job was to create a strategic, evidence-based guide to what students will be taught, how they will be taught, and how to improve the environments in which they are taught, with markers along the way to ensure we are moving in the right direction. Work group members studied characteristics of high-performing education systems around the world and interviewed national experts in the respective focus areas. Recommendations were then tested with focus groups of teachers, principals, district staff members, and members of the Board of School Commissioners.





## STUDENT WHOLENESS

Research bears out what common sense tells us: When students feel safe and supported, are interested in what they are learning and find it purposeful, when their curiosity is engaged and they are motivated, achievement improves. Successful schools provide opportunities for students to explore their interests, with enriching activities both in and out of the classroom. They also create positive cultures where students have the confidence to explore those opportunities.

Recent research has also shown that social and emotional learning and “noncognitive” skills are important for student success. For example, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and self-management as important for both personal and academic success, and has created a framework to equip teachers to help students develop these skills. Competence in these skills has been associated with improved academic outcomes, along with increased career success and well-being.

We also know from research and our own experience in our schools that students may need resources and support to ensure that their physical needs are met. Students who are hungry are likely to have trouble focusing on classroom assignments; students who need glasses may struggle simply because they can't see what's on the laptop screen or whiteboard.



## IN ACTION

Through a new partnership with Under Armour, the Baltimore Ravens, and the InSideOut Initiative, high school athletes will experience interscholastic athletics not just as an opportunity to excel on the field or the court, but as a way to connect with caring adults and to develop empathy, fairness, responsibility, and respect. Our high school athletic directors and coaches will have access to professional learning opportunities on using sports as an extension of the classroom to build character and develop well-rounded students. With additional support from Under Armour, students on high school teams will receive new uniforms, building their confidence and motivating them to greater success.

Restorative practices build positive communities based on the premise that open, respectful communication helps reduce conflict. When conflict does occur, restorative practices encourage students to focus not on punishment, but on the harm caused and on ways to repair relationships. In partnership with Open Society Institute–Baltimore, principles of restorative practices will be adopted across the district and 15 schools will receive intensive training in the approach from the International Institute for Restorative Practices, the Community Conferencing Center, and other trained practitioners. In addition, schools will establish supervised safe spaces where students can receive social, emotional, and academic support and interventions.

City Schools is committed to continuing and expanding programs and partnerships that improve the well-being of our students. In 2017-18, the district will begin offering free suppers to students who participate in after-school activities, in addition to providing free breakfast and lunch to all students. Partnerships like Vision for Baltimore will continue to bring needed health services to our students, and the resources provided through community schools will give students and families access to services such as food pantries and mental health counseling.



## LITERACY

Literacy in its fullest sense encompasses understanding and analyzing spoken and written texts from fiction and poetry to speeches, primary source documents in history, scientific research papers, news reports, opinion pieces, and more, in both print and digital form. It involves synthesizing information from multiple sources and subjects to solve real-world problems. It includes understanding modes of expression that are appropriate in different settings and being able to harness them to create clear, compelling, and powerful written and spoken texts of all kinds, from evidence-based essays to oral presentations to creative works in print and online. This is the literacy our students want and deserve in order to access what interests them, and it is what they need for success not only in all school subjects, but in careers and in life.

In Baltimore City, we have work to do. According to the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 9 percent of low-income children in Baltimore City Public Schools are reading proficiently when they begin 4th grade. This explains some of the academic challenges faced by many students in the middle grades, when expectations increase for reading and writing complex texts across subject areas.

Around the world, high school students in Canada, Singapore, Slovenia, Finland, and numerous other countries outperform students in most U.S. states in reading, according to the Programme for International Student Assessment. Schools in these high-performing countries, and in high-performing states like Massachusetts, have some common features, including emphasizing acquisition of a wide range of complex knowledge, deep conceptual understanding, and the ability to write well. We must take the opportunity to learn from our international colleagues, improving literacy instruction so students master foundational skills and academic vocabulary in the early elementary years—and continue to build skills and content knowledge so they are prepared for the more demanding, more rewarding, and richer literacy tasks that become the focus in middle school, high school, and beyond.

## IN ACTION

The staff member who serves as the literacy representative at each school will receive additional opportunities for professional learning beginning in 2017-18, and teachers at grades 3 to 5, 6, and 9 will receive focused training on best practices in teaching higher order literacy skills across content areas, including both reading and writing. In addition, at an initial 20 schools, a dedicated literacy coach will serve as an on-site expert on the district's literacy curriculum to provide direct support to teacher teams.

Over the course of the year, students will write and perform for real audiences, sharing their work with classmates, family members, and the larger community during the school day and at special family literacy nights. They will be surrounded in schools by print and digital texts of a variety of genres and complexity. In elementary schools, parents will receive resources to encourage reading at home. Districtwide, a series of literacy-focused events—for example, poetry slams, writing contests, spoken word events, and student “TED talks”—will showcase our students and highlight what they can do.





## LEADERSHIP

International and national studies—not to mention our own students—tell us consistently about the importance of teachers and other adults for student success. High-performing education systems around the world emphasize the professionalism of highly qualified teachers and have systems in place to encourage professional learning that focuses on the curriculum teachers teach; they work to develop leaders at all levels and ensure that collaboration, coaching, and mentoring are an essential part of the work day. In schools, this prioritizing of leadership and continuous professional growth contributes to a culture where staff and students alike know that learning is valued and celebrated.

City Schools took initial steps toward this vision beginning in 2010, with innovative teacher and administrator contracts that provide career pathways and encourage and reward professional growth. These features continue to be essential components of our contracts with our union partners, and we will use them to prioritize professional learning that improves instructional practice, to promote deeper content expertise, and to support training and mentoring for beginning teachers and school leaders. For example, beginning in 2017-18, the school leaders who have been recognized by the district as transformational principals will increase and formalize their role as mentors for principals across the district.

## IN ACTION

Schools will be encouraged to adjust scheduling to embed professional learning as part of every teacher's work day. As part of their professional practice, teachers will have time to review student work with colleagues, observe one another's classrooms, reflect, plan, develop content knowledge, and learn together. In addition, teacher leaders will have time in their daily schedules for mentoring new teachers, who will have reduced class sizes.

A new partnership with Towson University is a model for both deepening content knowledge and enhancing professional collaboration. Teachers of Advanced Placement Calculus and other advanced math courses from schools across the district are coming together in a professional learning community, working with college faculty in mathematics and sharing best practices in math pedagogy.





## SCALING UP FOR SUCCESS

On the next pages, detailed actions, expectations, and measures of effectiveness are outlined for each of the three focus areas, based on national and international research, school and district data, and deep knowledge of Baltimore’s students, schools, and communities. Together, these form a blueprint for our path forward for the next five years across the district.

In the 2017-18 school year, all schools (excluding charter and contract schools) will implement or work toward implementing many of the blueprint components—for example, adopting the CASEL framework, prioritizing literacy across grades and content areas, and making opportunities for teachers and staff to work and learn together.

In addition, schools will have the opportunity to apply to become one of 55 “intensive learning sites,” 20 focused on growth in literacy and 35 on student wholeness—with 15 of the latter concentrating on implementation of restorative practices. This strategy means that, while all schools will be guided by the blueprint, 55 will accelerate implementation

to become districtwide resources, with leaders and staff who can serve as mentors and collaborators with peers at other schools.

City Schools is also developing critical partnerships to support this work. Parents and family members will be encouraged and supported as key contributors to student and school success. Community and business partners have provided expertise along with generous in-kind and financial support to schools for many years, and those relationships are essential to realizing our vision.

Development of the blueprint would not have been possible without the input of all members of our community, and its successful implementation will depend on the continuing support of students, families, staff, and stakeholders. Through transparent communication and opportunities for feedback, we will gain ideas and expertise to adjust, adapt, and continue to move forward. That’s what happens in a community of learners.



# STUDENT WHOLENNESS

“Failing to meet students’ psychological, social, and emotional needs will continue to fuel gaps in opportunity and achievement for students—in particular, low-income students and students of color.”

MarYam G. Hamedani,  
Stanford University

# STUDENT WHOLENESSE

City Schools students are inspired to pursue their passions and reach their potential when schools provide engaging, safe, and supportive environments that foster well-being and meet academic, social, emotional, and physical needs.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

**SCHOOLS SUPPORT** students in developing self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship building, social awareness skills, and self-management, the five areas of competence outlined in the framework for social-emotional learning from the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

**SCHOOLS DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT** a professional development plan that builds staff knowledge of the social, emotional, cultural, economic, and family factors that affect student learning.

**SCHOOLS PROVIDE** a safe space where students can receive support outside of the classroom (e.g., “planning centers,” supervised settings where students receive social, emotional, and academic support, are supported through approaches such as restorative practices, and receive interventions designed to help them problem solve, develop appropriate school and classroom behaviors, and reduce the need for classroom removal).

**SCHOOLS CONNECT** students and their families to resources (e.g., neighborhood wellness centers, government agency services, community school partners) as needed.

**SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT** positive behavior management, based on the principles of restorative practice.

**SCHOOLS PROVIDE** a range of enrichment activities and expressive academics that ignite student passion for learning and actively engage students in their school community.

**SCHOOLS PROVIDE** rigorous academic experiences grounded in culturally responsive teaching, complemented by a variety of enrichment opportunities.

**SCHOOLS PROVIDE** academic resources and training for families to support student achievement.

**SCHOOLS COMMUNICATE** with parents routinely and positively about student behavior and academic performance, not limiting such communication as a response to specific episodes or incidents.

## EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR

### IN CLASSROOMS:

**TEACHERS KNOW** their students.

**TEACHERS INTEGRATE** the CASEL framework into the academic curriculum.

**TEACHERS ENGAGE** students every day in activities that promote positive behavior (e.g., class meetings, circles, restorative practices).

**TEACHERS REFER** students in emotional, behavioral, or academic crisis to the appropriate adult or to the school’s safe space (e.g., planning center).

**TEACHERS PROVIDE** a structured environment for learning that is safe, orderly, and supports students’ self-expression and leadership.

**ADULTS MODEL** learning continuously (e.g., by observing classroom practice).

### AROUND THE SCHOOL:

**STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FAMILIES** are all treated with dignity and respect.

**SCHOOL STAFF** know their students and create a warm and welcoming environment.

**STUDENTS** know they are valued and that they have a voice.

**STUDENTS** experience discipline as restorative rather than punitive, and they play a leadership role in problem solving and conflict resolution.

**STUDENTS** have the opportunity to take part in extracurricular options (e.g., sports, clubs, art, music, and other organized after-school activities).

**SAFE SPACES** are managed by trained staff who provide high-quality intensive interventions involving students, teachers, and families (e.g., restorative practices).

**SCHOOL STAFF** respect parents as advocates for their children’s education and are responsive to parents’ concerns.

**ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**, such as sports, are connected to learning and used to motivate and engage students.





## EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT OFFICE

**DISTRICT STAFF ROLES ARE ALIGNED** to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the vision for student wholeness (e.g., creation of a “whole child” department in the district’s Academics Office).

**ALL STAFF PARTICIPATE** in professional development to develop a common understanding of the CASEL framework and their responsibility in its implementation.

**DISTRICT STAFF DEVELOP** a strategic plan to phase in restorative practices districtwide, and support and monitor its implementation.

**DISTRICT STAFF ENSURE** that schools have appropriate funding to support key elements of a student wholeness approach (e.g., planning centers, training in restorative practices, a range of enrichment opportunities), including sufficient allocations for special education and the provision of a full curriculum.

**DISTRICT STAFF ENSURE** that free breakfasts and lunches for all students are provided, and that schools offering after-school activities provide free supper for all participating students.

**DISTRICT STAFF HAVE DEEP KNOWLEDGE** of the student wholeness priority, particularly those who supervise principals.

**DISTRICT EXPERTS REVIEW** partners who provide services and resources related to student wholeness annually, and provide schools with a directory of approved partners.

**DISTRICT STAFF ENGAGE** internal and external experts to gather feedback on student wholeness implementation priorities.

## ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

**FAMILIES, partners, volunteers, community residents, service providers, and vendors** consider themselves critical resources in the development of healthy, well-rounded students.

**FAMILIES PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY** in the development of policy and standards related to the student wholeness approach and in its implementation.

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS’ SUCCESS

**FAMILIES COMMUNICATE** with and are responsive to the school regarding their children’s academic performance and social-emotional competencies (e.g., behavior, confidence, relationship building).

**FAMILIES ESTABLISH** and maintain routines (e.g., at-home learning; consistent, on-time attendance).

**FAMILIES REINFORCE** the importance of a healthy lifestyle through proper health care, nutrition, and exercise.

**FAMILIES ACCESS** resources and opportunities for intervention, remediation, and enrichment.

**FAMILIES ACKNOWLEDGE** and celebrate positive behavior and performance.

### SUPPORTING SCHOOLS’ SUCCESS

**FAMILIES PARTICIPATE** in celebrations of learning at school and in presentation of student work portfolios.

**FAMILIES PARTICIPATE** in joint decision-making and reviewing of student wholeness implementation, when appropriate.

**FAMILIES VOLUNTEER** to support school priorities and activities to help create and maintain a positive culture and climate.

**FAMILIES ADVOCATE** on issues.

**FAMILIES SOLICIT** resources and materials to support school priorities.

**FAMILY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE** actively on school committees and advisory groups.

## MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

**TEACHERS USE** a scope and sequence and create related student learning objectives to support individual student development of CASEL competencies.

**PRINCIPALS AND COACHES USE** self-assessment tools and regular observations to identify areas that need improvement within implementation of the CASEL framework and create and monitor an action plan to adjust implementation accordingly.

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL INDICATORS ARE REFLECTED** in school effectiveness reviews.

**SCHOOLS MONITOR** and adjust student wholeness implementation efforts across the school through self-assessment data, student achievement data, and observational data.

**THE DISTRICT AGGREGATES** school-based data regularly to review progress in implementation and to adjust as needed.



# LITERACY

“As the currency used in schools, literacy provides access to literate institutions and has an impact on cognition, or thinking processes; it also shapes the way we think.”

Programme for International Student Assessment



# LITERACY

City Schools students thrive as learners in classrooms where highly effective, culturally relevant literacy instruction, grounded in the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, is evident every day. Students' literacy development is guided by teachers who use research-based instruction and assessment practices and who engage in extensive learning and reflection about pedagogy and the content they teach. Literacy activities that are authentic and reflect real-life experiences encourage and support students to achieve beyond their own expectations and to view learning as meaningful.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

**SCHOOLS PRIORITIZE** literacy as the foundation for all learning.

**SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT** coherent, rigorous, standards-based curricula in pre-k to 12th-grade English language arts and in literacy across each and every content area.

**TEACHERS HAVE TIME** in their daily schedules for professional learning, reflection, and collaboration to improve instruction.

**SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT** a comprehensive framework for literacy instruction that includes whole group instruction, small group instruction, and time for students to work independently.

**TEACHERS DIFFERENTIATE** instruction to meet the needs of all learners (including English learners, students receiving special education services, and gifted/advanced learners).

**SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT** a comprehensive, standards-based assessment system (including diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments) to guide instruction and professional development.

**SCHOOLS ENSURE** that print and digital texts are abundant across genres, with a balance of informational and narrative texts.

## EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR

### IN CLASSROOMS

**STUDENTS** are on task and engaged in challenging and meaningful learning.

**TEACHERS** use every minute efficiently.

**INSTRUCTION** meets grade-level standards, is relevant to students' lives, and demands student voice and choice.

**TARGETED INTERVENTIONS** are determined through regular review of data.

**STUDENTS'** oral and written discourse is grounded in evidence.

**STUDENTS** develop deep capacity for narrative technique, empowering student agency and voice in a range of oral and written forms.

**STUDENTS** establish goals for their own learning across the year.

**WORK SAMPLES** in student portfolios document growth across the year.

### AROUND THE SCHOOL

**JOYFUL LEARNING** and celebrations of success are evident.

**A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE** of open teaching practice and commitment to continuous improvement is the norm.

**COACHING CONVERSATIONS** take place every day among teachers, school leaders, and students.

**AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM** guides improvement in instruction across the school and ensures that teachers receive targeted, timely feedback.

**EXPERT-LED TEACHER TEAMS** collaborate in planning, practice, looking at student work, data analysis, and peer coaching.

**THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT** plan and schedule reflect clear prioritization of teachers' development of content knowledge and pedagogical expertise.

**DISPLAYS** of student work make learning visible throughout the school and in the community.



## EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT OFFICE

**DISTRICT STAFF PROVIDE** research-informed expertise in content and pedagogy and create structures and opportunities for teachers and school leaders to deepen their content and pedagogical knowledge, leading to continuous improvement in schools.

**DISTRICT STAFF CREATE** structures and opportunities for teachers and school leaders to collaborate across schools and share best practices.

**DISTRICT STAFF ENSURE** that teachers have common planning time and extended opportunities to learn about and become skilled in planning and teaching the curriculum.

**DISTRICT STAFF TAKE PART** in weekly learning walks.

**DISTRICT STAFF PROVIDE** ongoing, targeted, content-specific feedback that improves student achievement.

**DISTRICT STAFF INSTITUTE** cycles for evaluating and revising literacy materials, curriculum, and assessments to ensure they support meeting standards for all students across the continuum of need.

**DISTRICT STAFF PROVIDE** a user-friendly online platform for collecting, reporting, and analyzing data.

**DISTRICT STAFF ENGAGE** internal and external experts to gather feedback on literacy implementation priorities.

## ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

**SCHOOLS DESIGNATE** a parent liaison who ensures family engagement efforts include meetings focused on the literacy work in the school.

**FAMILY MEMBERS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE** on school committees and advisory groups.

**SCHOOLS PROVIDE** resources for families to encourage regular reading at home, including during the summer.

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE** in classroom celebrations of learning that are led by students.

**FAMILY MEMBERS REGULARLY MEET** with teachers to discuss student progress and ways to ensure it is on track.

**EXAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK** that meet standards are regularly shared and discussed with family and community members.

## MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

**EVERY SCHOOL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM (ILT)** sets clear expectations for implementation of literacy instruction that are reflected in school improvement plans and individual student learning objectives for all instructional staff.

**SCHOOLS MONITOR** and adjust implementation efforts across all content areas based on self-assessment data, student achievement data, and observational data.

**SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS ANALYZE DATA** (from formative, interim, and summative assessments) during school team meetings.

**ILT MEMBERS VISIT CLASSROOMS** regularly to ensure all teachers receive support to implement the literacy curriculum and literacy expectations fully across all content areas.

**CONSISTENT ANALYSIS** of student work results in improved classroom practice.

**THE ILT REVIEWS FEEDBACK** about professional development, ensures instructional staff implement newly learned content and pedagogy, and adjusts professional development plans based on trends in data.

**THE DISTRICT REGULARLY REVIEWS** aggregated school-based data to monitor progress in implementation and to make adjustments as needed.

**THE ILT ANALYZES** and adjusts curriculum based on students' needs.

**SURVEYS OF STAFF AND FAMILY MEMBERS SHOW** increased understanding of standards and curriculum implementation.

**THE ILT PARTNERS** with staff in the district's Achievement and Accountability Office to participate in school effectiveness reviews and to review data reports from school visits.





# LEADERSHIP

“Effective school autonomy depends on effective leaders, including system leaders, principals, teacher leaders, senior teachers and head teachers, as well as strong support systems. That, in turn, requires effectively distributed leadership, new types of training and development for school leaders, and appropriate support and incentives.”

Andreas Schleicher, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

# LEADERSHIP

City Schools leaders inspire, develop, and manage the conditions and environments that create high-performing learning communities that promote equity and excellence for all.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

### PRINCIPALS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

A **COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM** of leadership coaching for and among school-based administrators is in place, connected to cycles of inquiry and regular review of data on progress and outcomes.

**THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM (ILT)** is deeply knowledgeable about and accountable for guiding schoolwide instructional improvement.

**THE ILT CLEARLY COMMUNICATES** implementation expectations to staff and guides and monitors implementation.

**EXTENSIVE, RESEARCH-INFORMED** adult learning is embedded in the regular school schedule.

**THE ILT LEADS** strategic staffing efforts (identifying experts in content, pedagogy, and culture/climate).

**THE ILT ADVOCATES** for and secures resources aligned to the school's goals and priorities.

**THE ILT AND TEACHER TEAMS CREATE** a schoolwide learning plan with accompanying action steps.

**THE ILT MODELS** open communication and a culture of learning among all stakeholders (students, teachers, administrators, families, and community partners).

### TEACHERS AND STAFF

A **COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM** of instructional coaching, staffed by experts in subject matter and pedagogy, is connected to cycles of inquiry and regular review of data on progress and outcomes.

**ALL STAFF HAVE CONSISTENT TIME** for research-based professional learning (planning and reflection, regular practice, deepening content knowledge, collaboration, and mentoring).

**THERE IS A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM** of teacher support and evaluation, designed to support continuous improvement in classroom practice and student achievement.

**PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS SUPPORT** teachers as leaders within their schools.

**TEACHER LEADERS ENGAGE** in action research and design and lead professional development in their subject areas.

**TEACHER LEADERS MENTOR** new teachers.

**TEACHER LEADERS ENGAGE** in intensive external training facilitated by national and international experts.

**TEACHER LEADERS REGULARLY REVIEW** classroom data on progress and outcomes.

**CLEARLY DEFINED PATHWAYS EXIST** for teacher leaders to move into specialization, coaching, research, or school and district administration.

**LEADERS AROUND THE SCHOOL CONNECT** enrichment opportunities, such as sports, to learning and use them to motivate students and improve outcomes.

## EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR

### IN CLASSROOMS

**NOVICE TEACHERS** have smaller classes and work with trained mentors.

**INSTRUCTION DEMONSTRATES** awareness of and connection to school events, goals, and activities.

**TEACHERS MODEL** and facilitate student learning.

**TEACHERS CO-TEACH** as needed.

**TEACHERS MODEL** for and observe other teachers to support continuous improvement in teaching.

**CLASSROOMS ARE STUDENT CENTERED**, and students choose meaningful topics for research, discussion, and debate.

**THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES** for student leadership.

**STUDENTS AND TEACHERS** celebrate learning.

### AROUND THE SCHOOL

**POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE** are evident inside and outside the school.

**LEADERSHIP** is distributed among staff and students.

**STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS** take ownership of the school's improvement strategies.

**THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION** is functioning and active.

**LEARNING** is celebrated schoolwide.

**TEACHER TEAMS** regularly learn, plan, reflect, and solve problems together.

**THE MASTER SCHEDULE** prioritizes collaborative learning time for teachers.

**THERE IS A HIGH-FUNCTIONING ILT** that meets at least twice monthly.





## EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT OFFICE

**DISTRICT STAFF SUPPORT PRINCIPAL** professional learning communities that are organized around principals' needs and facilitated by successful principals.

**DISTRICT STAFF SUPPORT SCHOOLS** in examining teacher and school leader growth trajectories through benchmark conferences and the creation and review of student learning objectives.

**DISTRICT STAFF SUPPORT MENTORS** for new and aspiring principals.

**INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS PROVIDE** tiered support to school leaders based on student and staff needs.

**DISTRICT STAFF PROVIDE** accurate and comprehensive data to guide school leaders and support decision making.

**DISTRICT STAFF PROVIDE** schools with suggested frameworks for staffing and models for leadership development.

**DISTRICT STAFF ALIGN** resources of people, time, and money to prioritize adult and student learning that engages students in a rigorous college-, career-, and community-ready curriculum.

**PRINCIPALS COMPLETE** an annual survey to provide information about the effectiveness of district office supports.

**THE CEO MEETS** with student leaders from all schools annually.

**THE DISTRICT OFFICE STAFFS SCHOOLS** by creating pipelines for increased responsibilities and placing more senior principals in more challenging schools.

**THE DISTRICT OFFICE INFORMS** practice based on the latest research and guidance from national experts.

**THE DISTRICT OFFICE ESTABLISHES** a comprehensive system of continuous improvement, adjusting practice based on research, learning from intensive sites, and regular review of data.

**DISTRICT STAFF ENGAGE** internal and external experts to gather feedback on leadership implementation priorities.

## ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

**FAMILIES ARE ACTIVE AND ENGAGED** on advisory groups that support school improvement efforts.

**VARIED OPPORTUNITIES EXIST** for families to participate in schools and provide feedback (e.g., meetings, School Family Councils at each school, parent volunteers, parent centers).

**POSITIVE AND CONSISTENT PARTNERSHIPS** with local organizations support instruction, climate, and social-emotional needs of students and staff.

**FAMILY MEMBERS ARE TRAINED** to support and inform school instructional planning and implementation through school-based parent education sessions.

## MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

**SCHOOLS** monitor and adjust implementation efforts through self-assessment data, student achievement data, and observational data.

**THE DISTRICT** aggregates school-based data regularly to review progress in implementation and to adjust as needed.

**HIGH-FUNCTIONING ILTS** lead comprehensive instructional improvement work in each school.

**DISTRICT BELIEFS** are evident across the school.

**STAFF RETENTION RATES** and attendance increase across all levels.

**STUDENT ENROLLMENT** increases.

**INSTRUCTIONAL AND LEADERSHIP COACHING** for students, staff, and leadership is monitored, with check-ins and performance checks occurring during individual development plan conferences.

**ANNUAL SCHOOL SURVEYS** from students, families, and staff are used to adjust implementation and show increased satisfaction.

**DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF** members is included as a component in evaluation of teacher leaders and principal mentors.

**TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS** are held accountable for content and quality of student work portfolios.

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