



BUILDING PRIDE IN PGCPS

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S QUARTERLY REPORT • NOVEMBER 2018



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INTRODUCTION

In countless conversations since my appointment, parents and students continue to express the same desires and needs: Improved academic achievement. Upgraded school buildings and safer facilities. Reliable school bus transportation. Better communication and engagement with families.

I wholeheartedly agree. These are the basic building blocks of a high-performing school system. These should be the minimum guarantees for every parent who trusts Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) with their child.



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During this leadership transition, I have committed myself to students as the centerpiece of our work, strategies and improvements. The 2016-2020 Prince George's County Public Schools strategic plan, Outstanding Academic Achievement for All Students, is guided by five Focus Areas: Academic Excellence, High-Performing Workforce, Safe and Supportive Environments, Family and Community Engagement, and Organizational Effectiveness.

This is our roadmap to success and all roads lead back to the schoolhouse. All strategies must take into account the needs, interests and futures of more than 134,000 students.

Prince George's County Public Schools remains focused on our vision for all students to graduate ready for higher education, the workplace and life in a global society. With strong teaching and learning experiences, all students can achieve at high academic levels.

While our Focus Areas have not changed, it is clear that we need new measures of accountability and better systems of support to achieve our goals. Thus, I have identified five strategies under each Focus Area to move our work forward:

- Academic Excellence | Program Monitoring, Accountability and Effectiveness
- High-Performing Workforce | Compensation Restoration Task Force
- Safe and Supportive Environments | School Safety Assessment Initiative
- Family and Community Engagement | Community Engagement Forums
- Organizational Effectiveness | Central Office Restructuring

In the pages that follow, I will update you on our progress and ongoing challenges in our Focus Area strategies over the first quarter. We did not arrive at our current circumstances overnight. In many cases, it will take longer – much longer – to achieve sustainable improvements. I do believe, however, that through transparency and collaboration, we can – and we will – create lasting success.

Dr. Monica E. Goldson
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Prince George's County Public Schools

Our new Division of Accountability is tasked with strategic planning, performance monitoring and reporting of students, schools and the district as a whole. The division includes the following four departments: Monitoring and Accountability; Testing, Research and Evaluation; ESSA and Title I; and Strategic Planning and Resource Management.

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires states and school systems to publish annual report cards on student achievement and success. The report cards include information about academic progress, school quality, student success, progress in achieving English language proficiency, graduation rates and readiness for post-secondary success. The Department of Monitoring and Accountability has drafted the School Performance Plan (SPP), part of a comprehensive program to provide relevant data to schools, promote school improvement planning, capture the school-based analysis and established goals through the use of a standardized template, and provide for continuous performance monitoring on progress toward meeting the school's goals.

Our first systemwide report card, called School Stat, will be published this spring. There will be key performance indicators tied to our Focus Areas. We will look at a range of data to determine how best to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education. All principals have been introduced to the data monitoring tool and will be trained by the end of January.

School Stat will be a valuable data tool not only for principals, teachers and school staff, but the entire PGCPS community. School Stat will allow everyone to see our strengths and weaknesses in addition to our progress in meeting annual targets. Any decision we make should be based on data, particularly in the areas of student and school supports. School Stat will help to ensure data-driven decision making.

Key data points released over the last 100 days include the 2017-2018 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) results. I am pleased to report that student performance improved in English Language Arts. Our mathematics results show a need for significant investments in numeracy. Just as we invested more than \$2 million towards improving students' reading skills, we need to do the same for mathematics. I will propose additional mathematics resources in the fiscal year 2020 budget.



BY THE NUMBERS

93

EXPANDED ARTS
INTEGRATION FROM
73 TO 93 SCHOOLS

\$3M

NEW TECHNOLOGY
IN THE CLASSROOM



BY THE NUMBERS

NEW TEACHERS
FOR SY2018-2019

1K

\$25M

GREAT TEACHERS,
GREAT LEADERS,
GREAT SCHOOLS GRANT

2 HIGH-PERFORMING WORKFORCE

Strategy: Compensation Restoration Task Force

For more than a decade, PGCPS salaries have lagged behind neighboring school districts. This issue was exacerbated during the 2010 economic downturn. Despite efforts to restore parity, the salary issue has contributed to low employee morale and hindered staff recruitment. This cannot continue.

I created a Compensation Restoration Task Force to assess the need for restorative pay increases and provide a comprehensive assessment of all salaries compared to neighboring school districts and others of similar size and demographics. Fair compensation will ensure that we can compete for the best employees and maintain a high-quality workforce. The task force is composed of representatives from the school system, county government, labor partners and Board of Education members. Recommendations are expected by the end of the 2018-19 school year.

While compensation matters, working conditions matter just as much. Last year, PGCPS was awarded a three-year, \$25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to improve teacher hiring, placement, support and retention, focusing on 40 high-needs schools. The “Great Teachers, Great Leaders, Great Schools” grant will also be used to develop better evaluation tools and data management systems. Our grant work is already starting to yield powerful insights, particularly in the area of staff retention. The overall number of employees who remain with PGCPS from year to year is on par with surrounding jurisdictions. We must do more, however, to retain our high-performers – those who rate highest on employee evaluations – and those who work in hard-to-staff schools. I have charged our Human Resources team to devote more resources towards that goal.

In addition, we continue to engage our labor partners to improve working conditions and address long-standing issues. Through this partnership, we have been able to further streamline our administrative leave process to reduce the overall number of employees on leave and the length of time away from their school or office.

SAFE & SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Strategy: School Safety Assessment Initiative

With safe schools and office buildings, the focus can remain on teaching and learning. Prior to the start of the 2018-19 academic year, I reviewed safety plans for all schools and prioritized safety-related work orders. My executive leadership team has conducted a comprehensive safety assessment to include unannounced site checks at all 207 schools and a system-wide lockdown drill.

This work has helped to inform my budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year: more exterior cameras, expanded technology-based visitor management system and classroom door locks. We will provide additional funding and seek state resources for school safety plans. However, we will not limit our efforts to addressing potential threats from external perpetrators. School safety also encompasses environmental factors, in particular air quality. I have allocated \$850,000 through central office reorganization savings for air quality testing throughout the system.

Most importantly, we will continue to focus on planning and preparation in order to ensure everyone's safety in the event of an emergency.



BY THE NUMBERS

41

SUMMER
REPLACEMENT
PROJECTS

17

\$850K

AIR QUALITY TESTING



BY THE NUMBERS

PARENT/FAMILY
MEETINGS

8

BUSINESS/COMMUNITY
PARTNERS
MEETINGS

25

ELECTED OFFICIAL
MEETINGS

17

BOARD MEMBER
MEETINGS

15

UNION
MEETINGS

8

PGCPS EMPLOYEE
MEETING

1

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strategy: Community Engagement Forums

This fall, I launched a series of listening sessions designed to engage employees, parents and community members. The format allowed me the opportunity to hear their concerns, questions and to invite participation from community partners, such as the Prince George's County NAACP and Bowie Center for the Performing Arts. Attendees also met members of the executive leadership team and learned more about my vision for the school system.

During the four listening sessions, we heard from more than 150 speakers, received 172 questions and comments from our online submission form and engaged approximately 250 attendees. Recurring comments focused along these issues:

- Improved student achievement
- Class size
- School environmental safety
- Better building maintenance
- Transportation
- Accountability
- Promoting PGCPS
- Extending Professional School Counselors to year-round
- Comprehensive bullying program
- Increased parent engagement

I will move forward with additional meetings and listening sessions that target students, alumni and other segments of the PGCPS community. We will continue to provide structured opportunities such as forums and online surveys to gather concerns and recommendations. Education briefing documents are under development and scheduled for release in spring 2019.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Strategy: Central Office Restructuring

To address concerns about dwindling school resources amid rising numbers of executive-level staff, I announced in July a reorganization of central office executive-level and managerial positions to redirect funds and resources to schools. The reorganization included a freeze on all non-essential central office hiring. Several offices and positions were reorganized, realigned, reclassified or eliminated with the goal of reallocating at least \$1 million to improve instructional delivery and school system oversight. The reorganization was completed in September and yielded \$2.4 million in savings. This will provide \$800,000 in school supply reimbursements for classroom teachers and additional support for educators, administrators, support staff and bus drivers.

One key benefit of the reorganization was improving the content knowledge base among Associate Superintendents and Instructional Directors, who are now required to have direct experience with the grade configuration of the schools and students they serve. The investment in professional development will help to improve our overall effectiveness across employee groups.

Additionally, by grouping all high schools together, we can better monitor the implementation of recommended actions from the 2017 Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) audit of high school graduation rates. We have implemented online grade change forms for all schools after a successful pilot last spring and changed our Administrative Procedure on grading and reporting. Alvarez & Marsal Public Sector Services will issue findings from its follow-up audit later this year. Attendance policies remain an area of concern. I am working with my executive team to provide additional safeguards and educate all staff on policies.

\$2.4M CENTRAL OFFICE
REORGANIZATION
SAVINGS

\$800K
SUPPLY REIMBURSEMENT
FOR TEACHERS

\$225K
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT
FOR TEACHERS

\$225K
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR ADMINISTRATORS &
SUPERVISORY STAFF

\$150K
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR BUS DRIVERS &
SUPPORT STAFF

\$150K
CUSTODIAL SUPPLIES FOR
SCHOOL BUILDINGS





“ Understanding the extent of our concerns is the first step in resolving them and building trust with our community. Together, we will improve morale and performance so that everyone will be PGCPS Proud.”

DR. MONICA E. GOLDSON



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