



Blueprint for Maryland's Future:  
**Phase 2, Part 1**  
**Implementation Plan**

**Frederick County Public Schools**

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March 2024

# Systemwide Blueprint Implementation

Frederick County Public Schools' (FCPS) Implementation Plan is the strategic roadmap for how we will bring the vision of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to life. The work occurring in FCPS is a testament to our collective commitment to shaping a brighter future for our community. The content provided in this document represents more than a plan; it embodies our shared vision for a thriving, equitable, and resilient future for our students. As we continue on this journey, we are guided by the principles of innovation, collaboration, and equity. In this way, our plan represents our deliberate, evidence-informed, and strategic thinking around three key focus areas:

- **Educational Excellence:** Expanding career and technical education, implementing pre-kindergarten programs, and increasing educational opportunities for students.
- **Student Support & Well-Being:** Examining the structures and processes that support students, including curriculum, programs, resources, and wrap around services.
- **Equity and Accountability:** Discerning through a critical lens our resource distribution and support to schools, as well as consistent analysis and reporting on the impact of our investments.

The Blueprint calls for a transformation of how we educate children and youth, starting from our youngest learners through high school. To achieve this transformation, FCPS is rethinking and redesigning existing policies and practices to create a system that equitably serves all students and prepares them for success. Evidence of this transformation can be found in –

- The creation of System Improvement Teams that bring a laser focus to the seamless and comprehensive implementation of the Blueprint. Rather than working in silos, our System Improvement Teams include cross-disciplinary stakeholders from central office, building-level administration, and teachers who recommend strategies and actions related to educational transformation that align with the Blueprint.
- A change in our school-based staffing model to allow for further differentiation and additional staffing for high need schools.
- The strategic expansion of our Special Education program that includes a reimagining of our staffing allocations and program expansion.
- The implementation of a new service model for Multilingual Learners that allows for the decentralization of services to these students, as well as enhanced resources for our Multilingual Education Program.
- The adjustment of our timeline for the allocation of staffing that allows for external hiring to begin earlier than other Maryland school district.

## DISTRICT ALIGNMENT WITH THE BLUEPRINT

How are your district's vision, goals, strategic plan, and other system and school-level plans aligned to the Blueprint? Consider the connections across pillars and how the expected outcomes of the Blueprint intersect with and align to district programming.

In Frederick County, our vision and our promise is to empower our young people no matter who they are, no matter their backgrounds or circumstances. We want them to be prepared to succeed in college and careers. This vision is at the heart of the Blueprint. In this way, our mission is threefold and strives to:

- Reach our students with exceptional teaching and caring support,
- Challenge them to achieve their potential, and
- Prepare them for success in a global society.

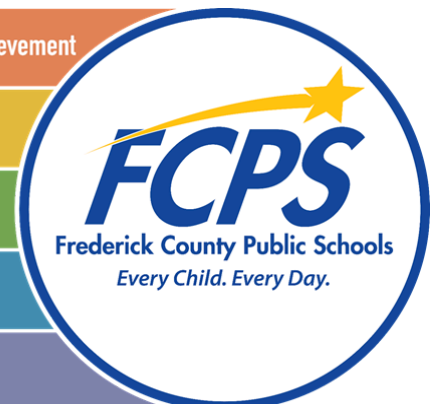
1. Organizational Culture of Achievement

2. Operational Excellence

3. Safety & Wellbeing

4. Stakeholder Engagement

5. Student & Staff Experience



This means that everything we do is with the intention of increasing outcomes for students, particularly those from historically marginalized groups or students facing unique learning challenges. With new system leadership in place in 2022, an updated and revised vision for systemic work was established through entry planning and extensive collaboration with stakeholders. In addition, performance indicators (KPIs) were established to measure effectiveness and baselines. These goals are aligned to the Blueprint and have connected targets or measures of success. Each goal area, the identified key performance indicators, and their connection to the relevant Blueprint pillar are linked [here](#). Additionally, we are currently working to further refine our KPIs to ensure alignment among and between pillars, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and Maryland Blueprint targets and expected outcomes. Revisions and updated KPI's to reflect this alignment are expected by July 1, 2024.

FCPS Key Performance Indicator	Pillar Connection	FCPS Programming
<b>Goal 1: Organizational Culture of Achievement and Key Performance Indicators</b> <i>FCPS will equip each and every student to be an empowered learner and an engaged citizen to achieve a positive impact in the local and global community.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase students on track for graduation</li> <li>● Increase high school graduation rate</li> </ul>	<b>3</b> <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High Quality Instructional Materials</li> <li>● Accelerated Learning Process</li> <li>● Equitable Grading Practices</li> <li>● Mind, Brain, Education</li> <li>● Evidence-Informed Practices</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reduce chronic absenteeism</li> <li>● Reduce percent of out of school suspensions</li> </ul>	<b>4</b> <b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Whole Child Approach</li> <li>● Code of Conduct</li> <li>● Enhancements to Student Discipline Practices and Processes</li> <li>● Evidence-Informed Practices</li> <li>● Truancy Reform Council</li> <li>● Expert Consultation for School Refusal</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase students meeting CCR requirements in both ELA and Math at the end of 10th grade</li> <li>● Increase the percent of grades 3-8 students scoring proficient and distinguished on MCAP ELA and Math</li> </ul>	<b>3</b> <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High Quality Instructional Materials</li> <li>● Accelerated Learning Process</li> <li>● Equitable Grading Practices</li> <li>● Mind, Brain, Education</li> <li>● Evidence-Informed Practices</li> <li>● Focus on Strengthening Inclusionary Practices</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase number of students attending preK</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase Number of preK Seats</li> <li>● Centralized preK Registrar</li> <li>● Outreach To and Collaboration with Private Providers</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Operational Excellence and Key Performance Indicators</b> <i>FCPS will hire, support, and retain staff who champion individual, professional, and student excellence.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase percent of qualified applicants</li> <li>● Increase number of hired candidates of color</li> </ul>	<b>2</b> <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grow Your Own Initiatives</li> <li>● Expansion of Recruitment Areas</li> <li>● Professional Development for Hiring Managers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain a staff retention rate of 94%</li> <li>● Increase the percent of teachers earning tenure</li> </ul>	<b>2</b> <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Career Development Series</li> <li>● Organizational Development Induction and Mentoring</li> <li>● Expansion of Certification and Tuition Reimbursement Initiatives</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 3: Safety and Well-Being and Key Performance Indicators</b> <i>FCPS will pursue and utilize all resources strategically and responsibly to achieve identified outcomes and inspire public confidence.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reduce disproportionate special education identification</li> </ul>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitoring Dashboards</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reduce the percent and disproportionality of 4th grade students requiring intervention services</li> </ul>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support Teams for Schools</li> <li>● Professional Learning</li> <li>● Accelerated Learning Process</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Decrease the number of years students remain in intervention for multiple years</li> </ul>	3	
<b>Goal 4: Stakeholder Engagement and Key Performance Indicators</b> <i>FCPS will pursue and utilize all resources strategically and responsibly to achieve identified outcomes and inspire public confidence.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain or increase the number of stakeholders who engage with FCPS through various communication options</li> </ul>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expansion of Tools (PeachJar); Deployment of Weekly Employee and Community Bulletin Boards</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain and strengthen active partnerships at the school, department, or system level annually</li> </ul>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual Partnership Application and Evaluations</li> <li>● Systemwide Training on Parent Engagement</li> <li>● Expansion of Community Schools/Coordinators</li> <li>● Special Education Partners for Success</li> <li>● Expansion of Services and Supports for Families</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the favorable response rate of parents to 90% on the family engagement survey</li> </ul>	5	
<b>Goal 5: Student &amp; Staff Experience and Key Performance Indicators</b> <i>FCPS will promote a culture fostering wellness and civility for students and staff.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase access to gifted and talented programming to mirror FCPS student demographics</li> </ul>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School Improvement Focus</li> <li>● Equity Access Dashboards in RADAR System</li> <li>● High School Courses in Middle School</li> <li>● Young Scholars Program</li> <li>● Primary Talent Development</li> <li>● Advanced Academics Professional Learning</li> <li>● Career Coach Program</li> <li>● Dual Enrollment Summits and Professional Learning for Dual Enrollment Deans</li> <li>● Professional Learning for AP Coordinators</li> <li>● Learning Journey and CCR Community Outreach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase access to advanced coursework (AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/CTE Completer) at high school to mirror FCPS student demographics</li> </ul>	3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the favorable response rate of students and staff to 90% on the systemic survey related to school climate, safety, and well-being</li> </ul>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Showcasing Students through Student Activities and Extracurriculars</li> <li>● Focus on Maximizing Student Voice</li> <li>● Whole Adult Approach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the favorable response rate of students and staff to 90% on the systemic survey related to workload, academic challenge, and available support</li> </ul>	4	

In Spring 2024, the Moore-Miller Administration released their state plan with specific KPIs for education in the State of Maryland. The Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), the agency overseeing the Blueprint, has detailed anticipated outcomes for local school districts. Finally, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has drafted new measures the agency will use as it evaluates strategic endeavors to enhance the educational program statewide. As FCPS embarks on releasing a new strategic plan in July 2024, we are reviewing and refining our recommendations for KPIs with this context in mind.

## COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

How your district is communicating its goals and plans with those implementing the Blueprint in the district, including principals and educators; soliciting feedback; and adapting its communication strategies to improve stakeholder understanding of the Blueprint's purpose.

FCPS has two approaches to stakeholder engagement: 1) Outreach and Communication; and 2) Engagement and Collaboration. These approaches are continuing to evolve and be adjusted based on the results and return on investment we experience. At the end of each year, we engage in a review of the existing approaches in favor of new or reimagined methods.

### OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

FCPS has maintained an active and reflective posture on sharing information with stakeholders in a regular and robust fashion. The FCPS Blueprint Website, [www.fcps.org/blueprint](http://www.fcps.org/blueprint), was established in 2021. During the 2022-2023 school year the following occurred:

- The FCPS Blueprint Website was updated and an email dropbox at [BlueprintComments@fcps.org](mailto:BlueprintComments@fcps.org) established.
- Board of Education presentations (December 7, 2022, February 22, 2023)
- Publication of an [overview video](#) on YouTube to provide information about Blueprint.
- One sheet summary documents were developed and disseminated for each pillar highlighting areas of work.
- Production of six YouTube shows featuring the leaders from each pillar discussing their work ([1](#), [2](#), [3A](#), [3B](#), [4](#), [5](#)). Each video included a QR code that linked to a SurveyMonkey tool for individuals to share direct feedback on our Blueprint efforts.

Based on our review of the above approach, we began the current school year by critically examining our stakeholder engagement and identifying areas for enhancement. We identified the need to make four key changes:

1. Increase the **engagement and participation of school-based and central teachers and administrators** in Blueprint design work and establish a System Improvement Team to meet quarterly.
2. Refine our **publications to focus on more frequent updates** and create a quarterly newsletter and a milestone report released twice a year.
3. Focus on **outreach to stakeholders in the community** through email blasts and the sharing of podcasts and resources to solicit feedback.
4. Adjust our **website to be more user friendly** and add a “button” on each page to deepen and extend what and how we share information with staff, students, families, and our broader community.



Blueprint Quarterly Review



Blueprint Milestone Report



Blueprint Unlocked Podcast



Send Your Feedback

Specific upgrades to our outreach and communication strategies we have made during the 2023-2024 school year in support of our Phase 2 Blueprint implementation plan include the following:

- Email and Website: We continue to maintain our [www.fcps.org/blueprint](http://www.fcps.org/blueprint) website and our [BlueprintComments@fcps.org](mailto:BlueprintComments@fcps.org) email dropbox.
- Survey: We continue to maintain an opportunity for input through electronic survey links. We have revised what we are asking stakeholders by using questions and prompts shared by the AIB to focus on the actions stakeholders believe we should consider to reach our goals. [Blueprint Feedback Tools](#)
- One Sheeters: We have shifted from the separate one-sheets on each pillar to a semi-annual summary document called [The Milestone Report](#). The first report was released on December 12, 2023.
- Media: Last year, we did mini-TV shows on our FCPS YouTube channel with each pillar co-chair. This year, we are

shifting to a recorded podcast called “Blueprint Unlocked” on our YouTube channel. The first episode was released in January 2024.

- **Newsletter:** This new resource, [The Blueprint Quarterly](#), looks beyond just FCPS and provides broader context on the work of the Blueprint both locally and across the region. This will be released four times a year; the first issue was released on December 1, 2023.

We have not received significant feedback from employees and the community regarding our Blueprint efforts. We have interpreted this to mean that our current approaches are robust and meet the needs of our stakeholders.

## ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

Our engagement and collaboration is focused particularly on our school staff and leaders. Our work with these stakeholders is done through the Blueprint Steering Committee and the System Improvement Teams. We recognized at the end of the 2023 school year that we needed to shift our steering committee approach and involve our school-based staff in Blueprint design and implementation efforts. Below are the key changes we made during the 2023-2024 school year.

**Steering Committee:** In 2022-23, we established a robust steering committee, composed of over 75 employees and community members working within each pillar. The link to the committee leadership and membership is [here](#). This year we shifted our Blueprint Steering Committee to meet every other month in the fall and monthly leading up to the submission of the Phase 2 plan. Highlights from these meetings are noted below:

September 13, 2023	November 7, 2023	January 18, 2023	February 7, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overview of MSDE Expert Review Team visits</li> <li>● Status of Career Ladder</li> <li>● Financial coding and funding requirements</li> <li>● Consideration of the Strategic Facilitator Grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updates on Expert Review Team Site Visit</li> <li>● Discussion of Phase 2 Implementation Plan</li> <li>● Vision for stakeholder and subcommittee stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expert Review Team Visit</li> <li>● Phase 2 Plan Development</li> <li>● Comprehensive Literacy Plan submission</li> <li>● Blueprint Unlocked Podcast</li> <li>● Phase 2, Part 2 Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update on each pillars current work</li> <li>● Phase 2, Part 1 Draft Plan Review</li> <li>● Expert Review Team Site Visit Reflections</li> <li>● Comprehensive Literacy Plan</li> </ul>

**System Improvement Teams:** Considering FCPS’s growing community, our five strategic goal areas, and the Blueprint pillars, we recognized the need to bring a laser focus on ensuring a seamless and comprehensive implementation of this work. While work is currently being accomplished by individual Blueprint pillar workgroups, we recognized the need for a comprehensive and cohesive look at implementation at each level. As a result, the Chief of Schools and System Accountability designed and is leading our System Improvement Teams for Blueprint implementation with a specific focus on engaging principals, leaders, and teachers. The charge of the System Improvement Teams is to:

- Review each pillar’s implementation plan.
- Evaluate schedules, human resources, curriculum resources, school structures, and processes that best support Blueprint implementation recommendations.
- Consider adjustments to enhance the organizational culture of achievement in schools, upgrade the student and staff experience, maximize safety and well-being, and align to Blueprint implementation.

Three teams have been established - elementary, middle, and high - that meet quarterly to recommend strategies and actions to support the aforementioned charge. Teams will ensure that schedules, staffing plans, and processes are strategically aligned to address Blueprint ideals and system goals. Teams include representatives from the central office, school principal and assistant principal representatives, and teacher representatives. Teams are co-chaired by either an elementary, middle, or high school director and principal. Community input will be garnered from already existing stakeholder input for the system’s Blueprint plan. Student

input will be incorporated via planned focus group meetings in March 2024. These focus groups will connect to previously collected survey data and focus on our development of personalized support pathways and the resources students feel they need to achieve the goals of the Blueprint.

The first meeting of the Systemic Improvement Teams was held on October 30, 2023, with subsequent meetings on January 5, 2024 and February 29, 2024. The final meeting of this school year will occur on May 3, 2024. In addition, on November 17, 2023, leads from all of the pillars presented information to a team of 150 central office staff in the Special Education and Student Services Department to ensure all staff have the background knowledge they need on the Blueprint pillars to achieve success. We are collecting feedback from members of the Systemic Improvement Team and a review of data collected to date suggests an increased understanding of and support for Blueprint related efforts.

**SYSTEM CHANGES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION**

How your district is making systemic changes to support ongoing Blueprint implementation; consider the strategies that have and have not been successful in your approach to reaching the Blueprint’s expected outcomes.

The Blueprint calls for a transformation of how we educate children and youth, starting from our youngest learners through high school. To achieve this transformation, FCPS is rethinking and redesigning existing policies and practices to create a system that equitably serves all students and prepares them for success. FCPS has deployed four systemic changes to support this transformation.

### TIERED STAFFING MODEL

A key strategy employed by FCPS is our school-based staffing model. FCPS allocates administrative and other school staff based on an equity model. Factors taken into consideration are included in the chart, with the end result that more complex schools receive increased levels of staffing. Each school’s demographic data is pulled annually and reviewed to ensure adequate and meaningful differentiation in school staffing. Currently, FCPS has a 3-Tier staffing model in place. In the FY25 Superintendent’s Recommended Budget, we have included a fourth tier in the staffing model at the high school level in recognition that schools with higher needs require additional personnel.

School Complexity Factors				
	Complexity Value	Complexity Value	Complexity Value	
Complexity Factors	0	1	2	
*Free Meals	<25%	25-40%	>40%	
Reduced Meals	<6%	6-9%	>9%	
Multilingual Learners	<12%	12-18%	>18%	
Special Education/504	<12%	12-16%	>16%	
Mobility	<10%	10-16%	>16%	
Homelessness	<10	10-20	>20	
TSI Designation	Non-TSI		TSI	
<b>Complexity Formula</b>	<b>Free Meals (X2) + Reduced Meals + Multilingual (X2) + Homeless + Mobility + Special Education/Exited/504 + TSI = Complexity Value</b>			
<b>System Response</b>	<b>Base Staffing Provided</b>	<b>Additional Staffing Provided</b>		
<b>Four Tier Total Complexity Value</b>	1-4 (Tier 1)	5-8 (Tier 2)	9-12 (Tier 3)	13+ (Tier 4)
*Free Meals and Multilingual are weighted twice in the complexity formula				

### STRATEGIC EXPANSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

FCPS conducted a request for proposals (RFP) and subsequently contracted with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to [audit the FCPS special education program](#) in place and provide strategic recommendations. This audit provided 16 recommendations that have resulted in a reimagining of our staffing allocations, program expansion recommendations, and the addition of specialized programming for students with Autism and inclusive preK. The recommendations are being refined and prioritized to ensure we are serving students with disabilities along a continuum and utilizing staffing and support models that will maximize success. A Student Support Action Plan guides the strategic expansion to support our students with disabilities.

### SERVICE MODEL FOR MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Prior to the Blueprint, FCPS utilized a centralized staffing model whereby students learning English would not attend their home school, but would be clustered together to receive services and support. Decentralization of the Multilingual Education Program (MEP) is a priority, thus allowing our multilingual learners to remain at their home schools. In the FY24 budget, we added 11.0 MEP

teachers, 5.0 FTE itinerant MEP teachers, 3.0 FTE MEP school counselors, and \$80,000 in MEP instructional materials. In the FY25 SRB, we have requested 2.0 FTE MEP community liaisons to support students and families.

## REIMAGINATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

FCPS has engaged in a strategic reimagining of Human Resources (HR) over the past 18 months. This includes a change in leadership, with HR shifting under the supervision of the Chief of Staff, who is also responsible for the Blueprint implementation. This shift in supervisory structure further ensured close coordination of the work as it connects to Blueprint execution. In addition, a new HR director was hired in 2022, including the assignment to co-lead the Pillar 2 subcommittee. This ensured direct connections and leadership on how the work to achieve increased recruitment and representation in hiring would occur. These leadership shifts have resulted in several key Blueprint-related accomplishments:

- Initial design and development of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) model
- Draft career ladder design approaches to meet the July 1, 2024 deadline
- Addition of a recruitment specialist position to assist the teacher recruiter with a focus on expanding partnerships with Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs)
- Salary increases to ensure we meet the Blueprint's \$60,000 minimum teacher starting salary by FY26.
- Innovations in labor agreements to provide incentives for "Grow Your Own" and prior experience credit
- Planning and design work has initiated on a teacher apprentice model

## AREAS OF CONTINUED FOCUS

While there have been a number of successful approaches to the actualization of our Blueprint work, there are areas of tension that require thoughtful consideration prior to initiating systemic change. These areas of tension include preK expansion, dual enrollment, funding allocations, and career and technology education expansion.

**PreK Expansion:** Our initial approach to preK expansion prioritized identifying space and increasing seats. While this rapid expansion was successful from the perspective of being able to serve 100% of Tier 1 eligible students, it provided challenges in managing the influx of preschool students and the range of needs presented. We have 1,212 preK students enrolled in 2024, which is a 32% increase in enrollment over last year; about half are receiving free/reduced meals and about 20% are students with disabilities. With this growth, we are now faced with reimagining our preK model to include a range of service delivery and staffing approaches that better align with the student needs that are present with our youngest learners.

**Dual Enrollment:** FCPS has remained an innovator in the area of dual enrollment with robust implementation of High School Based (HSB) courses. The HSB model provides an FCPS teacher (accredited by the local community college) to teach a course in our local schools, thereby reducing travel time and scheduling conflicts for students while increasing access to college courses. As a result, since the 2021-2022 school year, dual enrollment has increased by more than 50%; in spring 2024, we have 2,538 unique students taking 4,502 courses. In addition, advanced placement (AP) has increased by more than 25% with 3,647 students enrolled for 2023-2024.

The primary challenges we face with regard to dual enrollment are twofold: 1) Teacher development to meet the demands of enrollment, and 2) Cost control with the increasing access and local share requirements for free tuition, fees, and books. To address challenges with teacher development, we are currently exploring a new pathway for teachers to become dual enrollment instructors, as well as expanding access for FCPS dual enrollment instructors to Frederick Community College (FCC) professional learning. FCPS and FCC are working collaboratively to ensure a credentialing process for teachers that is accessible, transparent, and maintains a high standard for college faculty.

To address challenges associated with exponentially rising costs of dual enrollment, we are working with FCC to develop career and college pathways that not only build new explicit program tracks (FCC Biotechnology Internship, Career and Technology Center Medical Assisting DE track), but also ensure intentional sequencing of courses within a structure of approved courses and pathways that are provided at no cost. We are also working with FCC to develop data systems that will track and monitor what pathways/majors students are in, relative to the courses in which they are enrolled. Lastly, FCPS is providing guidance directly to our school counselors and dual enrollment deans, to ensure checks and balances in the enrollment process so that dual enrollment courses are aligned to a pathway and a student's career goals.



**Funding Allocations:** The Blueprint is focused on equitable increases in funding by student, school, and county and introduced new requirements for how districts construct their resource allocation models. This includes the rule that districts must ensure that 75% of dollars spent are attributed to schools in specific categories for both state and local aid. Additionally, dollars provided due to concentration of poverty must be spent 100% at the school-level. The primary challenge associated with this aspect of the legislation has been the complete reimagining of tracking and school-level attribution. This has required a further reexamination of resource allocations to ensure that staffing primarily used to benefit students at school sites are shifted from central office account locations for budgeting and that expenses managed by central office, but spent at schools, are accounted for accurately. This is a time and labor intensive endeavor that has required a complete overhaul of existing practice.

**Career and Technology Education (CTE) Expansion:** The last area that requires further thoughtful consideration is the manner in which we approach CTE expansion. In most school systems, CTE programming is either localized with small program models at individual high schools or centralized in a dedicated facility for the purpose of partial day attendance in a CTE program. FCPS employs both models. Given the lack of dedicated capital funding associated with Blueprint, we must reconceptualize how to expand our CTE programming given existing space limitations and financial resources. We are currently exploring new models that include mixed use spaces where we examine opportunities to expand CTE locations without needing to build a new facility.

## CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Your district's three greatest challenges to Blueprint implementation, including the rationale for selecting them, the specific initiatives/programs/strategies the district will implement to address them, and how your district will transform to implement these strategies effectively.

The following are the three greatest challenges to Blueprint implementation and how we will address them.

## RESOURCE REALLOCATION FOR REQUIRED COMPONENTS

There are three primary items that are mandated by the Blueprint that have significant cost implications: 1) Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), 2) The local share for teacher National Board Certification (NBC), and 3) Dual Enrollment. Costs of these required components are key priorities used to develop the budget, but are layered within a budgeting process that is complicated by a philosophy and mindset in public school systems focused on "adding on" new items with a reluctance to stop or discontinue existing programs in favor of new ones.

### *Approaches to Address Resource Reallocation for the Required Components*

- **PAR Program:** We have identified where the PAR program will be housed in our organizational structure and proposed in the FY25 budget a new position, Supervisor of Peer Assistance and Review. In addition, we have an established Teacher Evaluation Work Group (TEWG) that is co-chaired by the president of the teachers' association and Superintendent of Schools that is working to reach agreement on who is eligible for PAR, the role of the consulting teacher, and the role of the PAR panel. It is anticipated that we will have tentative design proposals to share with the negotiating teams by the start of the 2024-2025 school year.
- **NBC Expansion:** NBC continues to be a shared expense between the state and the district, with eligible staff receiving \$5,000 from the state and \$5,000 from the district. As the number of teachers pursuing and obtaining NBC grows, our local obligation proportionally increases.
- **Dual Enrollment:** Dual enrollment programming has expanded exponentially. In FY23, we spent nearly \$1.3 million. For FY24, we are anticipating expending \$2.2 million. We have a collective desire to not limit access to students, and are currently working with our community college to design structured pathways that guide student course selection.

These expenses, most of which rely on the local share, require us to make difficult decisions on how we meet the Blueprint requirements. This is coupled with managing real and pressing interests from our employees and community members in other areas such as funding for employee raises, special education program offerings, class size, bell times, and other key topics that fall outside of the Blueprint. Our strategy remains building the budget with prioritization for Blueprint-related items. Our budget development process begins in October when our Cabinet considers the system's strategic goals and identifies key items to ensure that we can

meet the expectations of the Blueprint without compromising on commitments. A key challenge we face, along with all school systems, is the discomfort of stakeholders and elected officials with reimagining current budget allocations and the redistribution of funds. When we have attempted to discontinue existing programs to use the funds for other budget needs, those recommendations have been met with resistance. Additionally, in each budget cycle there are desires and interests that must be addressed, and the current fiscal reality often limits our ability to add new items for consideration. In short, we enter each budget season with little room for adjustment and often face pressing needs to reduce expenditures. For example, during FY24 we attempted to cease both the virtual school and summer school programs to shift resource allocation to other key initiatives. This recommendation was met with objection and there was a reluctance to make those resource redistribution decisions through the budget process. Furthermore, school system budgets are not zero based, meaning that in most fiscal years the budget development process begins with the notion to continue with all existing programs. This approach of “adding on” creates additional challenges with the ease and opportunity to discontinue existing programs or consider resource reallocation broadly. Additionally, the Blueprint requirement for local districts to budget and expend 75% of funds at the student level has been met with challenges due to the delay in receiving guidance on the business rules to do so. As a result of not yet receiving the updated financial reporting system and manual by MSDE by the July 1, 2023 due date, compliance with this provision is difficult for school systems across the state. This makes the building of our budgets further complicated by the time and labor needed to do the updated coding that needs to occur.

***Approaches to Address Resource Allocation:*** Addressing resource reallocation must include continued budget repurposing and reprioritization. This work must target communication with stakeholders and elected officials about the rationale to discontinue certain programs or approaches in favor of new innovations in order to pursue strategic resource reallocation. In addition, addressing resource reallocation must include budget modeling using existing business rules to track spending at the individual school level. This includes modeling aggregate funding in addition to the individual funding program at the school level.

## **DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE 60/40 REQUIREMENT**

Chapter 36 of the Blueprint legislation established an average teaching time of 60% as a percentage of total working time for all teachers to be phased in over eight years beginning in fiscal 2026, as well as additional average teaching percentage targets as teachers ascend the career ladder. It also expressed the General Assembly’s intent that as the Blueprint is implemented and teachers are provided with additional collaborative time, the student-to-teacher ratio in public schools will be reduced. This has created a primary challenge to reimagine the student day, particularly at the elementary level, in order to meet the percentage of time teaching (switching to 60% teaching, 40% release). While at the middle and high school level, the course schedule and student day are relatively conducive to this shift, the elementary day will require more significant reimagination. This might include adjusting our student day, approach to minutes of instruction, or other innovations in how we spend and use our time.

***Strategies to Address the 60/40 Requirement:*** Our System Improvement Teams are drafting a number of strategies for addressing the 60/40 challenge, such as examining the length of the student day, the length of the teacher day, and how seat time is organized and experienced through the school day schedule. These recommendations are at the initial stages and we expect more formalized strategies to be identified over the next year.

## **PREK PRIVATE PROVIDERS**

Based on the number of children enrolling in kindergarten in FCPS and the number now being served by our existing preK program, we may not have enough open seats beyond serving Tier 1 students. The three main challenges our providers and Early Childhood Education (ECE) team have identified are:

- Private providers are unable to hire certified teachers to fill the positions. FCPS draws most ECE certified teachers in the region into our employment ranks. Private providers find it difficult to compete with FCPS’ salary and benefits.
- Private providers have shared that the human capital needed to support accreditation and EXCELS is far more than they can handle when there is often one director overseeing all operations. Often the business consultants who work with private providers to evaluate the feasibility of entering into this partnership conclude that the drawbacks outweigh the potential benefits.
- Some private providers perceive the per pupil funding to be too low for them to create state-funded preK programs. They have indicated that the difference in state funding and privately-paid tuition is not high enough to apply for MSDE’s child care provider grant and its numerous requirements, including reporting. The flat rate per preK seat does not exceed what most local childcare programs receive from self-pay families. Therefore, they would lose revenue by participating in state-funded preK.

*Approaches to Address PreK Private Providers:* We continue to engage in targeted outreach to private providers, providing grant assistance, and increasing the number of available preK slots for students even in the midst of having decreasing private provider interest. We have also decided to waive tuition for families at Tier 2 for the coming year as our enrollment period opened a week after MSDE discussed the sliding scale so that we do not unduly burden families while we await guidance from MSDE as to the process and approach for tuition collection.

## MONITORING PROGRESS

How the district will monitor progress towards addressing its three greatest challenges to reaching the Blueprint's expected outcome.

Monitoring progress toward addressing the challenges involves examining student data and managing long term change management for implementation. Regardless of the identified challenges, we remain focused on student learning and associated outcomes for each pillar; our monitoring is focused on three key items.

### 1. Refine and Monitor Data from the FCPS Learning Journey

We designed the [FCPS Learning Journey](#), a [graphic](#) representation of how the Blueprint and our milestones for success are experienced from preK through 12th grade.

### 2. Maintain and Expand Strategic Data Reporting

We established a refined schedule for strategic plan reporting with seven scheduled Board presentations on our key performance indicators (see pages 2-3, above) with deliberate Blueprint pillar connections.

### 3. Prioritize Workgroup Design Input and Outcomes

We have established a workgroup to tackle how to operationalize the staff and student schedule in the 60/40 model. We are monitoring progress to address this challenge through the engagement of the workgroup and its deliverables.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

The submission of the FCPS Blueprint Phase 2, Part 1 plan encapsulates a comprehensive framework designed to address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities within this seminal legislation. This initial part of our Phase 2, Part 1 plan outlines our strategic and targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing equity, improving academic outcomes, and fostering innovation across all levels of our educational program. By leveraging data-driven strategies, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and prioritizing the needs of diverse student populations, the plan sets a clear pathway for advancing educational excellence and ensuring every learner has the resources and support needed to thrive.