

School Plans and Measurable Goals Summary, 2020-21

Many staff in the Office of Evaluation, Research, and Accountability contributed to collecting, analyzing and summarizing the information that appears in this brief. Major contributions were made by Kelly Linker, Soula Servello, Ebru Erdem Akcay, Sabriya Jubilee, Keren Zuniga McDowell, Jonathan Vitale, and Jason Leach.

Every year, each school in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) participates in a standardized schoolwide planning process. This involves completing a needs assessment, identifying the root causes of those needs, and creating a budget and subsequent action plan to address the identified needs. The planning process for the 2020-21 school year took place from February to August 2020 and had four phases: Root Cause Analysis and Budgeting, Action Plan Development, Stakeholder Input and Final Edits, and Sign Off and Submission (see Table 1 for an overview).

Table 1. Overview of the four phases for creating school plans

Phase	Dates	Title	Description
1	February 6- March 27	Root Cause Analysis and Budgeting	Schools use various data sources to review both whole-school and subgroup data to identify strengths and challenges. Stakeholders are engaged in the planning process, including the identification of root causes for the school's challenges and where the school will allocate resources to address those needs.
2	March 30- May 31	Action Plan Development	Schools identify priority areas to set measurable goals to monitor progress toward addressing school needs. This occurs through the identification of evidence-based approaches that will help improve student achievement.
3	May 31- August 7	Stakeholder Input and Final Edits	Stakeholders represented on the school's planning committee support the school in reviewing, developing, editing, and preparing for final submission of the school plan.
4	August 10- August 31	Sign Off and Submission	Superintendent, Board President, and school principals review, sign-off, and submit finalized school plans.

During Phase 1 (Root Cause Analysis and Budgeting), each school conducted a needs assessment by consulting stakeholders (families, students, school staff, and community partners) and reviewing relevant data (student, educator, and community demographics; student achievement and growth; student and teacher attendance; student behavior; documents; classroom observations; surveys; focus groups; budget/allocation of finances, etc.). The goal of this phase was to understand both the needs of the school and the causes of those needs. Based on the needs assessment, in Phase 2 (Action Plan Development), schools identified several challenges based on core areas of need. Schools then utilized the challenges and the 5-whys root-cause analysis process to prioritize two or three of the challenges and develop priority statements. Finally, for each priority statement, schools identified one or two measurable goals that serve as a way for schools to track their progress toward the priority statements. Examples from challenges, priority statements, and measurable goals from school plans are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of challenges, priority statements, and measurable goals from school plans

School	Challenge	Priority Statement	Measurable Goal
1	At the end of 2018-19, 57% of 9 th graders and 38% of 10 th graders were off-track for graduation.	We will implement a multi-tiered system of supports for academics by regularly reviewing data with students and providing opportunities for grade improvement.	At least 75% of first-time 9 th grade students will be on-track for graduation.
2	10% of students had been suspended at least once through March 13, 2020.	We will implement an evidence-based system of schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports with a focus on establishing uniform expectations and procedures.	At least 95% of 9-12 grade students will have zero out-of-school suspensions.
3	Percent proficient or advanced in English Language Arts (24.1%) is an area of concern.	School teams use a collaborative process to analyze a variety of assessment data (including diagnostic, formative, and summative) in order to monitor student learning and adjust programs and instructional practices.	No more than 48% of students in grades K-5 will score in Tier 3 by the spring AIMSweb Plus assessment, as evidenced by the grade-level composite score.

This brief summarizes the priorities identified by 217 District schools for the 2020-21 school year, the goals chosen by schools, and how goals vary across school levels and federal accountability designations (explained in the School Goals by Federal Accountability Designation section).¹

¹ School plans were completed by school staff and submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (which provided a copy to SDP).

School Priorities

Schools developed priority statements for each of their challenges by selecting from a list of 15 priorities and then adapting the statement to their school-specific needs (so each school has two to three priority statements). The most frequently chosen priority statement was “Identify and address individual student learning needs,” which was chosen by 103 schools, followed by “Implement a multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior” (101 schools; Table 3). Only one school chose “Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the school” as a priority statement.

Table 3. Number of schools that chose each priority statement

Priority Statement	Number of Schools (out of 217)
Identify and address individual student learning needs	103
Implement a multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior	101
Promote and sustain a positive school environment where all members feel welcomed, supported, and safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically	73
Use systematic, collaborative planning processes to ensure instruction is coordinated, aligned, and evidence-based	69
Use a variety of assessments (including diagnostic, formative, and summative) to monitor student learning and adjust programs and instructional practices	60
Implement an evidence-based system of schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports	53
Foster a culture of high expectations for success for all students, educators, families, and community members	28
Provide frequent, timely, and systematic feedback and support on instructional practices	24
Monitor and evaluate the impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning	15
Collectively shape the vision for continuous improvement of teaching and learning	13
Identify professional learning needs through analysis of a variety of data	13
Implement evidence-based strategies to engage families to support learning	10
Use multiple professional learning designs to support the learning needs of staff	10
Build leadership capacity and empower staff in the development and successful implementation of initiatives that better serve students, staff, and the school	9
Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the school	1

Note: Each school prioritized two to three of their challenges and wrote a priority statement for each that aligned with one of the 15 categories provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and approved by SDP.

School Goals

SDP created focus areas (Academics and Climate) in order to categorize positions, non-personnel spending, and measurable goals according to their involvement with specific areas of work related to school plans, then assigned each position, cost, and goal to at least one area. In addition, SDP created sub-focus areas to further drill down into smaller categories. Sub-focus areas for Academics are ELA, Math, and College & Career Readiness, while Climate sub-focus areas are Attendance and Suspension.

All schools selected at least one Academics goal, with most having an ELA (English Language Arts) or math goal (Table 4). Most schools that identified a College and Career Readiness goal were high schools, with no elementary schools selecting a goal in this sub-focus. Most schools (194 or 89%) also had a Climate goal, with schools selecting attendance goals more frequently than suspension goals.

Table 4. Number of schools that have goals in each focus and sub-focus area by school level

Focus Area	All Schools	Elementary	Elementary -Middle	Middle	Middle -High	High
Number of Schools	217	48	99	14	7	48
Academics	217	48	99	14	7	48
ELA	192	45	89	12	2	43
Math	195	40	92	13	6	43
College and Career Readiness	53	0	2	3	4	43
Climate	194	41	92	13	4	43
Attendance	180	37	84	13	3	42
Suspension	159	31	79	13	3	33

Note: Each school has multiple goals and is therefore counted on more than one row. Widener School (which is a K-12 special education school) is not included in the school-level breakouts.

School Goals by Federal Accountability Designation

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced the No Child Left Behind Act, allows each state flexibility to identify and serve schools in need of support. The process of identifying schools for support in Pennsylvania results in three designations²:

1. **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI, 43 schools):** Schools facing the most significant school-wide challenges in academic achievement, student growth, and other areas. Schools are considered CSI if they fall into the lowest-performing 5% of all schools receiving Title I funds in the state, or any high school with a combined four- and five-year

² For more information, see <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/ESSA/FutureReady/Pages/DesigSchoolsTSI.aspx>.

adjusted cohort graduation rate of 67% or less. Schools enter this designation on three-year cycles.

2. **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI, 17 schools):** Schools in which performance by one or more student groups is at or below the level of the CSI schools. Schools enter this designation on three-year cycles.
3. **Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI, 59 schools):** Schools in which performance by one or more student groups is low but not low enough to be designated A-TSI. Schools may enter or leave this designation annually and it is intended to serve as an early warning indicator for A-TSI.

Almost all schools that received an accountability designation chose an ELA or math goal, and 26 CSI schools (63%) chose a College and Career Readiness goal (compared to 35% of A-TSI schools, 2% of TSI schools, and 20% of schools with no designation; Table 5). Fewer schools with no designation chose a suspension goal (55 or 56%, compared to 91% of CSI schools, 88% of A-TSI schools, and 88% of TSI schools).

Table 5. Number of schools that have goals in each focus and sub-focus area by school designation

Focus Area	All Schools	CSI	A-TSI	TSI	No Designation
Number of Schools	217	43	17	59	98
Academics	217	43	17	59	98
ELA	192	43	14	56	79
Math	196	41	16	51	88
College and Career Readiness	53	26	6	1	20
Climate	194	42	17	56	80
Attendance	180	41	17	52	70
Suspension	159	39	15	52	55

Note: Each school has multiple goals and is therefore counted on more than one row. Ten schools are both A-TSI and TSI. For this brief, they are included in the A-TSI group.

Of the 76 schools who were designated as A-TSI or TSI, 44 had goals in their school plan specifically for one or more subgroups of students (schools are identified as A-TSI or TSI because they have one or more student groups who are performing lower than other students at the school). Subgroups included core racial/ethnic groups, as well as students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students. For example, a school may set a target on math proficiency specifically for students with disabilities. It was most common for schools to mention multiple subgroups in their goal, followed by Black/African American students and students with disabilities (Table 6).

Table 6. Number of A-TSI or TSI schools that have goals in each focus and sub-focus area for each student subgroup

Focus Area	Black / African American Students	Hispanic/ Latino Students	Economically Disadvantaged Students	English Learners	Students with Disabilities	Multiple Subgroups
Number of Schools	10	2	4	4	7	20
Academics	8	1	3	4	7	19
ELA	6	0	2	4	6	17
Math	6	1	2	1	3	13
College and Career Readiness	2	0	0	0	0	0
Climate	4	1	1	0	2	7
Attendance	2	0	0	0	2	0
Suspension	1	0	0	0	0	1

Note: Each school has multiple goals and is therefore counted on more than one row.

Conclusion

Every year, each school in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) completes the Schoolwide Planning process which includes selecting priorities and goals that inform funding and programmatic decisions. The most frequently chosen priority for school year 2020-21 was “Identify and address individual student learning needs,” followed by “Implement a multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior.” All schools had at least one Academics goal, with most having an ELA or math goal. Most schools who had a College and Career Readiness goal were high schools, with no elementary schools having a goal for this sub-focus. Most schools also had a Climate goal, with attendance occurring more frequently than suspension.