



The School District of Philadelphia
Superintendent Performance Evaluation

Dr. Tony B. Watlington, Sr.

School Year 2023-2024

BOARD COMMENTS

The 2023-24 school year marked a pivotal year for Dr. Tony B. Watlington, Sr. and the School District of Philadelphia, marked by significant progress and renewed momentum in its mission to deliver quality education. During his second year as Superintendent, the District achieved significant milestones, including an increase in student enrollment, improved attendance rates, rising graduation rates, and notable progress in student performance. These achievements reflect the District's dedication to the Board's mission of providing high-quality education to every student and reaffirm its focus on recovery and growth.

The Board commends Dr. Watlington for his steadfast leadership and continued monitoring and implementation of Accelerate Philly Strategic Actions towards the Board's Goals and Guardrails. The fruits of his labor are evident in the measurable improvements that have propelled the District closer to pre-pandemic benchmarks. By fostering collaboration, ensuring accountability, and driving a culture of excellence, Dr. Watlington has set the District firmly on the path to sustained progress and long-term success.

This year was also one of transition for the Board itself, with a new Board of Education being appointed by Mayor Parker on May 1, 2024. In the face of this change, Dr. Watlington and his leadership team worked diligently to ensure a seamless process, fostering constructive collaboration with the new Board. This shared commitment to the District's priorities has been integral to maintaining the momentum of the District's success.

As we look to the future, it is clear that the road ahead will bring both opportunities and challenges. Among the most pressing issues is the District's upcoming financial reality and the need to address critical priorities that will shape its trajectory. To navigate these complexities, the Board emphasizes the importance of staying focused as an organization, building on the successes of this year, and leveraging the progress we have made.

The Board looks forward to continuing its partnership with Dr. Watlington to develop processes and evaluations that monitor progress and ensure accountability. Together, we remain committed to capitalizing on our successes, strengthening the District's foundation and paving the way for a brighter future for every student in Philadelphia.



2023-24 Evaluation

Executive Performance Summary

**Tony B. Watlington, Sr.; Ed.D.
Superintendent**

December 16, 2024

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EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

As superintendent, my charge is for the District to achieve the Board's Goals and Guardrails, as well as become the fastest improving large, urban school district in the country. A foundational step for achieving the Board's Goals and Guardrails is to improve performance in the conditions for success measures, including: safety, student attendance, teacher attendance, 4-year graduation rates, and dropouts. Over the past two years, student enrollment increased, student attendance increased, the 4-year graduation rate increased, test scores increased for students in grades 3 - 8, and the number of student dropouts decreased by more than 1,400 students.

Additionally, in January 2024, the Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research and The Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University released the [Education Recovery Scorecard](#). This report, which included 30 states representing 60% of the national public school student population, found that **the District had the fastest School Year 2022-23 post-pandemic recovery in math grades 3-8 and second fastest recovery for reading in grades 3-8, among all large, urban peer districts,¹ that were included in the study.**

These District improvements occurred in the face of significant challenges, including:

- Historic underfunding,
- Aging facilities,
- Declining teacher pipeline, as well as
- Unaligned curriculum in District and charter schools

My administration continued to work hard and strategically in School Year 2023-24 to mitigate these challenges, while capitalizing on the following strengths:

- Strategic Plan execution
- Fiscal stewardship and credit rating increases
- Improved District communication & branding
- Improved student achievement

¹ Large, urban peer districts are the The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) districts included in the study. Selection criteria are based on district size, percentages of African American or Hispanic students, and percentages of students eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program.

The roadmap to accelerate academic achievement is outlined in the District's 5-year strategic plan, *Accelerate Philly*, which was developed with input from hundreds of community members representing diverse roles, neighborhoods, and demographics. At the core of this plan is the Board's Goals and Guardrails, which challenge me and my team to act with a sense of urgency and accountability and to partner with our communities throughout the City of Philadelphia. Specifically, the plan outlines strategic priorities and actions to address accelerating learning, school safety, partnerships with our families, facility improvements, and fiscal responsibility.

Unanimously adopted by the board in June 2023, *Accelerate Philly* is organized around five priority areas and includes 62 strategic actions, with a focus on improving student outcomes, strengthening community engagement, and ensuring financial transparency and effectiveness. In the first two years of implementation, 47 strategic actions have been launched, with a particular emphasis on Board Goals 1 through 4. Notable accomplishments include a 6.2% increase in 3rd-grade reading scores and a 6.6% increase in 3rd-grade math scores, supported by actions such as the implementation of core instructional resources (Strategic Actions 3.2 and 3.3) and the piloting of evidence-based, high-impact tutoring in select schools (Strategic Action 3.5).

Additionally, efforts to strengthen Guardrail 3—improving parent and community engagement—have seen measurable success. The launch of a two-way communication system (**Strategic Action 2.1**) has improved responsiveness, while website updates (**Strategic Action 2.2**) have enhanced the ability to more effectively share key information with school communities. Strategic action project teams have also established advisory groups for teachers, principals, and students (**Strategic Actions 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6**) to support collaborative decision-making and foster stronger relationships among stakeholders.

A cross-sector facilities planning project team (**Strategic Action 1.1**) has been established to identify investments and processes to support academic achievement and align with Guardrails 1 and 2. Unlike past facilities planning processes undertaken by the school district, this process is focused on supporting communities and creating conditions that help to drive improved student achievement. To date, the District has completed Phases 1 through 6 of the plan and is on track to complete Phase 7 in December 2024, "Develop a Comprehensive Data Warehouse." Additionally, the District will complete Phase 8 and present a final facilities plan for the Board of Education's review and approval by December 2025.

Looking ahead in the 2024-2025 school year, the District will establish a Superintendent's parent and guardian advisory group (**Strategic Action 2.3**) to ensure diverse voices are included and represented in decision-making. Additionally, the District is on track to relaunch Parent and Family University (**Strategic Action 2.9**) to expand resources and supports for families.

Financial management has also been a priority through implementation of an extended budget development timeline and process, as well as evidence-based financial practices (**Strategic Action 5.8**), including zero-based budgeting and return-on-investment

analyses. To date, over \$200 million has been allocated to support the implementation of *Accelerate Philly* and advance the Board's goals and guardrails.

In addition to our successes, my team continues to transparently share areas where we have not made adequate progress and our specific plans to make improvements. For example, while we are experiencing improvements in grades 3 and 4 relative to Board Goal 1 (ELA, grades 3-8), we have work to do to expand this improvement to the grades 6 through 8. Additionally, my team will focus intently in the remainder of School Year 2024-25 and 2025-26 on the new Science Goal (grades 4 & 8) as well as the Board Goal 4 (Algebra & Literature). Key actions in these areas will include providing enhanced support for teachers in content knowledge, student engagement, and culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices (**Strategic Action 3.9**), which is now in its second year of implementation. The District is in its second year of purchasing and implementing standards-aligned core instructional resources for math (**Strategic Action 3.2**), and its first year of doing so for English Language Arts (ELA), with a focus on the Science of Reading (**Strategic Action 3.3**). We will implement standards-aligned core instructional resources in science in School Year 2025-26.

Strong fiscal leadership coupled with successful implementation of Accelerate Philly strategies over the past two years have resulted in more strategic alignment of resources, improved academic outcomes in 9 out of 13 areas, improved internal and external communication, and stronger community engagement. As I align central office evaluations to these improvement areas and related annual targets this school year, the District will continue to drive progress in pursuit of achieving the Board's goals and guardrails and preparing our students to imagine and realize any future they desire.

Finally, I will focus the work of the Central Office and school on the following areas in School Year 2024-25:

1. Continue to implement Accelerate Philly strategies with impact relative to Board's Goals and Guardrails.
2. Launch our new Central Office Evaluation System.
3. Negotiate Three Union Contracts.
4. Prepare the Facilities Plan (Phase 8) for Board of Education's review & action by December, 2025.
5. Execute Mayor Parker's Priorities:
 - a. Strengthen our 20 Extended Day, Extended Year Pilot Schools
 - b. Launch The City College for Municipal Employment (CCME)
 - c. Explore a Prospective Philadelphia Children's Promise Zone patterned after and in partnership with the Harlem Children's Zone.

STANDARD 1: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Met Standard: x

Did Not Meet Standard:

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS						
Metric Name	2021-22 Results	2022-23 Results	2022-23 Progress	2022-23 Results	2023-24 Results	2023-24 Progress
Student Attendance	57.3%	60.0%	+2.7 %-pts ●	60.0%	61.1%	+1.1 %-pts ●
Teacher Attendance	77.5%	83.5%	+6.0 %-pts ●	83.5%	83.4%	-0.1 %-pts ●
Student Dropouts (Grades 7-12)	3,917	3,652	-265 ●	3,652	2,517	-1,135 ●
Graduation Rate (4-Year Cohort)	71.2%	74.1%	+2.9 %-pts ●	74.1%	77.5%	+3.4 %-pts ●

ACADEMIC GOALS						
Metric Name	2021-22 Results	2022-23 Results	2022-23 Progress	2022-23 Results	2023-24 Results	2023-24 Progress
Goals 1-3: Grades 3-8						
PSSA/PASA Proficient or Advanced						
Grade 3 Reading	28.1%	31.0%	+2.9 %-pts ●	31.0%	34.3%	+3.3 %-pts ●
Grade 3 - 8 Reading	34.4%	34.0%	-0.4 %-pts ●	34.0%	34.0%	+0.0 %-pts ●
Grade 3 Math	20.8%	26.5%	+5.7 %-pts ●	26.5%	27.4%	+0.9 %-pts ●
Grade 3 - 8 Math	16.5%	20.7%	+4.2 %-pts ●	20.7%	22.0%	+1.3 %-pts ●
Grade 4 and 8 Science	37.1%	40.2%	+3.1 %-pts ●	40.2%	40.4%	+0.2 %-pts ●
Goal 4: Best by 11th Grade						
Keystone Proficient or Advanced						
Algebra 1	36.3%	30.1%	-6.2 %-pts ●	30.1%	27.2%	-2.9 %-pts ●
Biology	34.9%	31.4%	-3.5 %-pts ●	31.4%	32.3%	+0.9 %-pts ●
Literature	47.6%	53.9%	+6.3 %-pts ●	53.9%	51.9%	-2.0 %-pts ●
* Due to COVID-19 pandemic-related test cancellations and exemptions, Keystone results for 2022-23 are compared to pre-pandemic (2018-19) performance.						
Goal 5: Grade 12 CTE						
NOCTI	43.4%	49.1%	+5.7 %-pts ●	49.1%	57.0%	+7.9 %-pts ●

Over the past two years, student attendance increased, the 4-year graduation rate increased; test scores increased for students in grades 3 - 8; the number of student dropouts decreased by more than 1,400 students; and enrollment in District-operated schools has increased, for the first time in nearly a decade, by 1,800 students. In my second year as superintendent, I continued to provide monthly reports to the board on the five conditions for success (safety, student attendance, teacher attendance, dropouts, and graduation rate). In the 2023-2024 school year, we achieved growth in four out of five areas, specifically:

- Safe path programs **increased** from **13 to 24**
- Student regular attendance **increased** from **60% in SY22-23 to 61.1% in SY23-24**, which represents a 1.1 percentage point increase.
- Teacher regular attendance **remained flat** from **83.5% in SY22-23 to 83.4% SY23-24**, which represents a -0.1 percentage point decrease.
- Student dropouts **decreased** from **3,652 in SY22-23 to 2,517 in SY23-24**, which represents a decrease of 1,135 students who dropped out of school this year.
- Graduation rate (4-year cohort) **increased** from **74.1% in SY22-23 to 77.5% in SY23-24**, which represents a 3.4 percentage point increase.

In the second year of implementation for *Accelerate Philly*, the District's five-year strategic plan, students made significant progress in a number of areas over the past two years. Specifically, in the 2023-2024 School Year, the District made progress in 9 of 13 Goal indicators (69%), was flat in 2 of 13 Goal indicators (15%), and regressed in 2 of 13 Goal indicators (15%). Over the past two years, the District has made significant progress in a number of areas:

- **Increased** the number of students with regular attendance (90 percent or more days) **by over 3,500**;
- **Decreased** the number of students who dropped out of school **by 1,400**;
- **Increased** the percentage of 3rd grade students scoring proficient or advanced in reading **by 6.2 percentage points**;
- **Increased** the percentage of 3rd grade students scoring proficient or advanced in math **by 6.6 percentage points**;
- **Increased** the percentage of 3rd-8th grade students scoring proficient or advanced in math **by 5.5 percentage points**;
- **Increased** the number of students passing NOCTI exams **by 13.5 percentage points**.

METRIC	ACTUAL	TARGET	ACTUAL	RATING	TARGETS					GOAL
	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	2029-30
Student Attendance	60.0%	62.2%	61.1%	Not met (+)	62.0%	63.0%	64.0%	65.0%	66.0%	67.0%
Teacher Attendance	83.5%	80.0%	83.4%	Met	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%
Dropouts	3,652	2,750	2,517	Met	2,390	2,260	2,130	2,000	1,850	1,700
Graduation Rate	74.1%	76.1%	77.5%	Met	77.6%	79.1%	81.1%	83.1%	85.1%	87.1%
Board Goal 1 (ELA grades 3-8)	34.0%	34.7%	34.0%	Not met	36.2%	39.2%	43.6%	49.2%	56.1%	65.0%
Board Goal 2 (ELA grade 3)	31.0%	31.6%	34.3%	Met	33.2%	35.8%	39.5%	45.2%	53.7%	62.0%
Board Goal 3 (Math grades 3-8)	20.7%	21.1%	22.0%	Met	22.2%	23.9%	27.4%	34.2%	42.7%	52.0%
Board Goal 3 (Math grade 3)	26.5%	26.9%	27.4%	Met	28.0%	29.7%	33.2%	40.0%	48.5%	57.5%
New Goal (Science grades 4 & 8)	40.2%	40.9%	40.4%	Not met	_*	_*	_*	_*	_*	_*
Board Goal 4 - Algebra	30.1%	30.5%	27.2%	Not met	31.8%	33.7%	36.5%	40.8%	46.1%	53.0%
Board Goal 4 - Biology	31.4%	31.8%	32.3%	Met	33.1%	35.0%	37.8%	42.1%	47.4%	54.0%
Board Goal 4 - Literature	53.9%	54.3%	51.9%	Not met	55.2%	56.8%	59.4%	62.5%	66.4%	71.0%
Board Goal 5 - NOCTI	49.1%	51.3%	57.0%	Met	54.1%	57.5%	61.8%	67.1%	73.3%	80.0%

Our District met or exceeded eight out of 13 annual targets in School Year 2023-24 (see table above). While we did not meet the target set for student attendance, we did see an increase in student attendance year over year (YOY). Similarly, we did not meet the target for Science in grades 4 & 8 but we did increase slightly. There were three academic areas that remained flat or declined, including grades 3-8 ELA, Best by 11th Algebra 1, and Best by 11th Literature. Our main strategies for addressing these areas are as follows:

1. **3-8 ELA** - In the 2024-2025 school year, the District rolled out a new districtwide English language arts (ELA) curriculum. The Office of Curriculum and Instruction conducted an extensive review process, with internal and external stakeholders to select Expeditionary Learning and Study Sync as the two new ELA curriculum. These two resources received the highest scores, and best aligned with our instructional philosophy, content research, and the Common Core Standards. Additionally, these ELA Core Instructional Resources received an “all green” rating from EdReports, an independent nonprofit designed to improve K-12 education by identifying the highest quality curriculum and instructional materials. With the implementation of the new ELA curriculum, we aim to achieve the target for this area.

2. **4 & 8 Science** - In the 2025-2026 school year, the District intends to implement a new districtwide science curriculum. The Office of Curriculum and Instruction conducted an extensive review process, with internal and external stakeholders to select Amplify Education, Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, and Savaas as the three new Science curriculum. These resources received the highest scores, and best aligned with our instructional philosophy, content research, and the Common Core Standards. Two of the Science curriculum and core instructional resources, Amplify Education and Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, received an “all green” rating from EdReports. Savaas has yet to be rated by EdReports. During the 2024-2025 school year, the District is conducting a pilot of the new Biology curriculum and instructional resources in five schools (Edison High School, Lincoln High School, Martin Luther King High School, Masterman, and Northeast High School), to best prepare for districtwide implementation in the upcoming school year.
3. **Best by 11th Algebra** - Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year and continuing through the 2024-2025 school year, the District expanded access to 8th grade Algebra I in 25 schools (237 students) using a Cross School Learning hybrid model. In an effort to improve Algebra I performance, we are supporting students, who failed one or more Keystones to successfully retake by the end of 11th grade. Additionally, we are targeting funding and support to specific networks for effective implementation of Illustrative Math; increasing the number of instructional minutes to 90 for Algebra for the 2024-25 school year; and creating math pathways to identify opportunities for students to take Algebra I when they are ready. The Academics Services Division is also collaborating with the University of Pennsylvania to offer content courses in Algebra I for all 8th and 9th grade teachers. These courses will utilize the District's Illustrative Math curriculum and accompanying guides. Throughout the school year, UPENN, in partnership with the SDP, will also provide instructional coaching and feedback on lesson implementation for students.
4. **Best by 11th Literature** - As stated above, in the 2024-2025 school year, the District rolled out a new ELA curriculum. This will work to address this target.

STANDARD 2: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Met Standard: x

Did Not Meet Standard:

Decades of chronic underfunding continues to be a critical challenge for the District. In February 2023, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court accepted the petitioners' argument in the School Funding Lawsuit, and declared the Pennsylvania school funding system unconstitutional. In July, together, Governor Shapiro, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and the Pennsylvania State Senate, made historic investments in public education, as the Commonwealth's FY25 budget took the first step toward closing the adequacy gap. As the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds sunset, this package, which represents a \$231.9 million increase, will allow the District to stay on track as we implement *Accelerate Philly*. It will also help position the District to become the fastest improving, large urban district. With the increased funding allocated to the School District of Philadelphia, I continue to effectively manage our public resources as evidenced by the following outcomes:

- In December 2023, as part of Accelerate Philly, we launched **strategic action 5.8**: “*Extend the operating budget development timeline and use evidence-based budgeting practices to improve collaboration and transparency.*” Through this process, we hosted 47 engagement sessions, where we were able to directly engage with key stakeholders like students, families, teachers, principals, support staff, Central Office staff, unions, elected officials, and non-profit partners. The expanded budget process also launched a budget survey, which allowed us to learn what is and is not working, as well as where we need to allocate resources.
- In February 2024, we announced the District would maintain the 350 ARPA-funded, school-based positions for Fiscal Year 2025. This provided a 1 percent increase in teacher allocations across all schools. Additionally, this allowed the District to increase English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching positions to meet the needs of our growing English Learners (ELs) student population.
- In April 2024, we announced the discontinuation of leveling in any schools or classrooms after the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. We reallocated up to \$8.8 million from Central Office cuts and energy savings to fund this effort. Additionally, we took the following financial responsibility measures, which allowed us to eliminate leveling and reduce the deficit:
 - Reduced Central Office budgets, with no layoffs of current employees;
 - Implemented a modified zero-based-budgeting process;
 - Improved the accuracy estimates and reserves throughout the budget;
 - Implemented data-driven program evaluations to determine return on investment; and

- Partnered with the Fund for the School District of Philadelphia to seek private and foundational support for critical Accelerate Philly initiatives.
- In May 2024, FitchRatings upgraded the District's credit rating to BBB-, which is investment grade credit. This is the first change to our FitchRating since 2019. With this upgrade, both Moody's Investor Services and FitchRatings credit ratings for the District are investment grade. You can view the FitchRating release [here](#). This follows the recent improved outlooks from both Moody's in May 2023 and Fitch in June 2023.

STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONALISMMet Standard: Did Not Meet Standard:

This year, I modeled a high-level of ethical and professional standards of behavior for District staff. Specifically, I demonstrated collaborative, results-oriented and data driven work culture in the Central Office, while also enhancing the District's profile through thought leadership initiatives, including:

- **Served as a Board of Directors Member:** *Represented the District as a Board of Directors member of the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), which represents 78 urban districts across the nation.*
 - Council of Great City Schools (CGCS)
- **Presented at National Conferences:** *Presented at 6 national conferences.*
 - Institute for Education Innovation, "Transformational Leadership: Digging Deeper," Washington, D.C., November 7, 2023
I served as a keynote speaker and provided school superintendents with an overview of 5 levers for accelerating student achievement based upon five decades of peer reviewed research in the United States, strategies for implementing a Board of Education's vision and mission, and best practices for strategic plan development and execution.
 - American Association of School Administrators - Building a Equity-Centered Leadership Pipeline to Become the Fastest, Improving Large Urban District, San Diego, California, February 15, 2024
As a presenter, I shared how the District defines equity-centered leadership, practices equity-centered leadership, and discussed the student outcomes we are achieving. Specifically, I highlighted the student achievement levers that drive equity-centered leaders, the five Equity Framework questions and how they drive our decision making process. Additionally, I provided information on the District's equity-centered leadership pipelines.
 - The Campaign For Grade Level Reading - The Education Recovery Scorecard: Results and Implications Webinar, Virtual, April 9, 2024
As the District has experienced strong post-pandemic academic recovery, I was invited to serve as a panelist to share key strategies and approaches we have applied to realize this progress. During the panel, I highlighted how our intense focus on the Board's Goals and Guardrails, as well as the conditions for success has contributed to the improvement in academic achievement. Additionally, I shared how the District has adopted a new, high-quality curriculum and invested in teacher professional development to drive positive student outcomes.
 - American Educational Resource Association (AERA) - "One Philly: How the City and School District of Philadelphia Collaborate to Achieve Educational Success," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 12, 2024.

I joined Mayor Cherrille Parker and AERA President, Dr. Tyrone Howard, to discuss the state of K-12 education in the City of Philadelphia. During the panel discussion, Mayor Parker and I shared how the Board, District and the City partner together to drive positive outcomes for students, as well as accelerate academic achievement. Specifically, we discussed how the City and District can address disparities, the vision for education, and the role for education research to drive outcomes.

- National Conference on Student Assessment (NAEP) - "Powered by NAEP Panelist." Seattle, Washington, June 23-26, 2024.

I participated on a panel featuring state and district education leaders, where we discussed the importance of using NAEP data to drive academic achievement in K-12 education. During the panel, I shared how NAEP scores are one of three measures the District is using to track our progress towards becoming the fastest improving large, urban district in the nation. Additionally, I shared how we work to make our NAEP results actionable, and how we use the data to inform our improvement strategies.

- California Association of Black School Educators (CABSE) Institute - "The Equity Blueprint: You Built It. Now Let's Inspect It." Napa, California, July 16, 2024.

I participated on a panel discussion with leaders from across the county about definitions of equity and models for how Districts can calibrate and evaluate their equity strategies.

- **Conducted Multiple National Interviews:** *Conducted 5 national interviews.*

- CBS National: ["Philadelphia closes some schools early due to extreme heat"](#)
- Fox National Weather: ["Heat forces Northeast schools to close early"](#)
- Good Morning America: ["Celebrating young entrepreneurs in Philadelphia"](#)
- Good Morning America: ["Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts donates \\$200,000 for air-conditioning units in Philadelphia schools"](#)
- Washington Post: ["Burst in covid spending helped students recover, researchers find"](#)

- **Served as a member in National Education Organizations:** *Served as a member of 7 national education organizations.*

- The American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- The Council for Great City Schools (CGCS)
- The Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE)
- The National Association of Black School Administrators (NABSE)
- The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- The National Education Association (NEA)
- The National Superintendent Roundtable (NSR)

In School Year 2023-24, my administration continued to aggressively address the historic reputation of the district exhibiting poor communication and transparent community engagement. The team actively engaged our: students, families, educators, school leaders, central office and school-based staff, as well as community and business leaders. This year, I demonstrated collaborative leadership and strengthened the District's communications and community engagement efforts with internal and external stakeholders through the following actions:

- 1) Launched a two-way communications system with multilingual capabilities to improve communications with families and the community across the entire Central Office. (**Strategic Action 2.1**)
- 2) Launched a Superintendent's teacher advisory group. (**Strategic Action 2.4**)
- 3) Launched a Superintendent's principal advisory group. (**Strategic Action 2.5**)
- 4) Relaunched a Superintendent's student advisory group. (**Strategic Action 2.6**)
- 5) Increased positive news coverage and audience reach of the District.

Following the approval of *Accelerate Philly*, in terms of implementation, one of the immediate priorities was to launch strategic action 2.1: "Launch a two-way communications system with multilingual capabilities to improve communications with families and the community across the entire Central Office." On Tuesday, September 5, 2023, the District launched a pilot of Let's Talk, a new, multilingual platform for families, students, staff, and community members to engage with the District and provide a customer service rating at the end of each interaction. Initially piloted in the Superintendent and Board of Education offices, I charged the Office of Communications to fully implement Let's Talk across all offices in the Central Office throughout the 2023-2024 School Year. In the 2023-2024 School Year, the District achieved the following performance metrics on Let's Talk:

- 10,550 total messages
- Average customer service score of 7.8 out of 10
- Average response time of 3.9 business day

Building on the customer service focus established with the implementation of Let's Talk, I launched the superintendent's student, teacher, and principal advisories in December 2023. These advisories serve as an engagement platform where I engage directly with students, teachers, and principals across the District on a monthly basis. These councils convene monthly to share feedback, discuss perspectives, uplift successes and present concerns. These councils also provide input on District initiatives, including District policy changes or *Accelerate Philly* strategic actions.

In tandem with a focus on community engagement in School Year 2023-24, the District continued a focus on improving internal and external communications. Traditionally, the District has been plagued with significant, negative media coverage, which makes it difficult to attract high-quality talent and instill confidence with our business and community partners. To combat this issue, I maintain a heightened focus on the District's media relations strategy. As a result, I continue to share a weekly media coverage recap my

"Superintendent's Weekly Highlights" memo to the Board of Education, which includes the following metrics:

- Sentiment
- Audience Reach
- Ad Equivalency
- Links to the broadcast or publication

Additionally, the improved communications and media strategies led to the following results for SY 2023 - 2024:

- Increase in positive media coverage from 27% in SY 2022-2023 to 40.6% in SY 2023-2024, which represents an **increase** of 13.6 percentage points.
- Decrease in neutral media coverage from 51% in SY 2022-2023 to 45.6% in SY 2023-2024, which represents a **decrease** of 5.4 percentage points.
- Decrease in negative media coverage from 22% in SY 2022-2023 to 13.8% in SY 2023-2024, which represents a **decrease** of 8.2 percentage points.